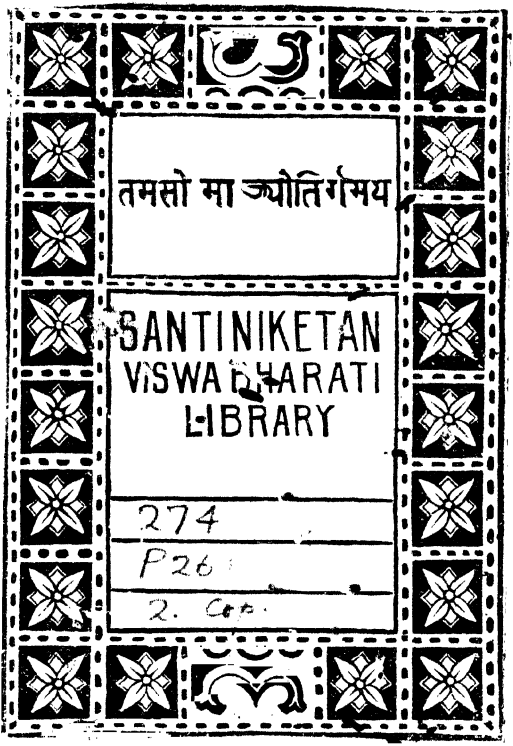
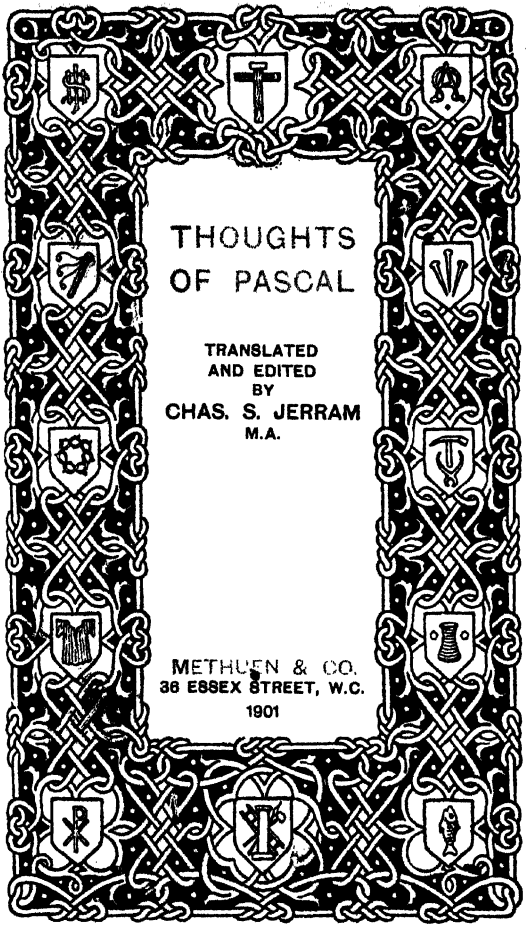

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THOUGHTS OF PASCAL

TRANSLATED
AND EDITED
BY
CHAS. S. JERRAM
M.A.

METHUEN & CO.
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

	PAGE
I. Scope of the present edition . . .	ix
II. Some Prefatory Notes	x
Table of Dates	xxxvii
Life of Blaise Pascal by his Sister . .	1
Pascal's Profession of Faith	51

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

Against the Indifference of Atheists . . . 53

CHAPTER II

Man's Lofty and Low Estate. The Astonishing Contradictions in his Nature 65

CHAPTER III

Vanity and Self-love 79

CHAPTER IV

The Effects of Imagination, etc. 84

CHAPTER V

Miseries and Distractions . . 92

CHAPTER VI

PAGE

Advantages of Dress, Birth, etc. Originality unpopular 97

CHAPTER VII

Thoughts on Reason, Custom, Justice, Law, etc. 100

CHAPTER VIII

Thoughts on Glory, Intelligence, Instinct, Style, etc. 109

CHAPTER IX

Scepticism, Reasoning, Intuition . . . 113

CHAPTER X

The Existence of God. The Wages. Eternity. Faith and how to obtain it . . 119

CHAPTER XI

The Notes of True Religion 130

CHAPTER XII

The Work and Grounds of True Religion. Its Double Nature 134

CHAPTER XIII

The Powers and Limits of Reason . . 139

CHAPTER XIV

Death and Doubt 143

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

PAGE

The Jewish Religion. Its Double Intention. Pascal's Religion 145

CHAPTER II

Types and Hidden Meanings 149

CHAPTER III

The Three Types of Greatness—that of the World—that of Intellect—that of Love. The Greatness and Low Estate of Jesus Christ. Christ is the Centre of the Old Order and the New 154

CHAPTER IV

The Prophecies prove Jesus Christ and prepare the way for Him 158

CHAPTER V

The Jewish, Mahometan, and Christian Religions 160

CHAPTER VI

God is seen by some, hidden from others . . . 161

CHAPTER VII

Nature does not prove God. Only in and by Jesus Christ do we know God . . . 165

CHAPTER VIII

Miracles 170

CHAPTER IX

PAGE

The Power of Reason. The Power of Inspiration. The Value of Tradition. Thoughts on the Pope, Jesuits, Jansenists, etc. . 176

CHAPTER X

Thoughts on Self. Man's Desires, his Faults, Faith, Knowledge, Duty, etc. The Power of the Cross 198

CHAPTER XI

The Mystery of Jesus 208

APPENDIX

Comparison of the Early Christians with those of to-day 217

INTRODUCTION.

I

Scope of the present edition.

IN this little book my aim has been to select such "thoughts" as are still of general interest, avoiding, as much as may be, controversial matters, and those long series of texts from the Bible which illustrate Pascal's view of miracles. I have ventured to omit whole passages dealing with the more abstruse subjects of prophecy and theological criticism, and have tried instead to call attention to those logical, deeply considered, often sarcastic, and always delicately chosen thoughts on matters of simple faith and simple life—thoughts part of which all can understand, and the full meaning and beauty of which will be revealed now to some sudden perception, now to patient and prolonged consideration. Pascal's aim was to express the truth in such a way that there should be *rien de trop, ni rien de manque.* A selector and editor would adopt this motto, though he could

scarcely hope that his work would altogether exemplify it.

To the selected *Pensées* is prefixed a translation of Madame Perier's charming little life of her brother. To know what a man is, and how he became what he is, is the best help towards understanding what he has to say, and Madame Perier was intimately acquainted with every physical, spiritual and intellectual crisis in Pascal's life. She herself is an interesting personality. Discreet, accomplished, and well-instructed in mathematics, physics and history, she was besides *belle et bien faite*. Attached to the world by many ties, she quitted its pleasures in the fulness of her beauty and success at the age of twenty-six. Her *Life of Pascal* is appreciative and in good taste, and is a model of sisterly affection; though attached to most of the French editions of the *Pensées*, apparently it has not hitherto been translated into English.

II

Some prefatory notes.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE *Pensées*. EDITIONS, STYLE, ETC.

For several years before his early and lamented death M. Pascal had it in mind to write a work upon the proofs of religion, but the state of his health did not permit him to carry out his project. With the marvellous memory which

is so frequent an attribute of genius, he stored up in his mind lines of argument upon this subject, occasionally putting down on paper detached thoughts, or passages of sustained, controlled and concentrated eloquence dealing with the several subjects of his proposed discourse. In 1670 Port Royal published a first edition of these *Thoughts*, with an Introduction by M. Étienne Perier, Pascal's nephew.[1] The *Thoughts* were arranged in the order which seemed best to Pascal's old friends and comrades of Port Royal. Unfortunately, however, additions and alterations were made in the text. Passages which seemed to the timid and the conventional too bold, somewhat sceptical, or touched with the heresy of the Jansenists, were watered down. The editions of Condorcet and of Bossut remedied part of these imperfections, but it was reserved for M. Cousin, in 1842, and M. Faugère, in 1844, to present to the world an authentic "Pascal."

In the arrangement of the fragments of

[1] Several passages in this Introduction are almost word for word the same as passages in the "Life of Pascal" by his sister, a translation of which is prefixed to this edition. The "Life," though originally intended for the first Port Royal edition, was not published till 1684 (and then at Amsterdam), probably through fear of calling attention to old controversies.

M. Pascal's proposed work editors have had little to guide them. While agreeing with M. Havet's statement that every classification seems to be arbitrary, I have thought it improper for an English editor to form his own scheme, and have in the main followed that of M. Havet, who himself followed the well-known edition of Bossuet. But I have ventured with M. Louandre and others to bring to the front that logical, profound and passionate statement in which the teacher indicates the grounds of his religion, and the foolish and trifling position of his opponents.

Amongst English editions I have often consulted Mr Kegan Paul's *Pascal's Thoughts*, and have often found his translations right when at first I thought them wrong. But, as in all translations of great writers, the main difficulty is the style. In Pascal we have two very different styles, that of the *Provinciales* and that of the *Pensées*, each adapted to its subject matter, and each perhaps equally difficult to render. In the *Provinciales* we have transparent clearness, yet exquisite subtlety of thought and style, vivacity, wit, very delicate handling, irony, the tone and breeding of the man of the world. Pascal plays his victim as the skilled angler plays a trout, and it is true enough that Jesuitism has never recovered from the attacks of the distinguished Jansenist. Even when

our sympathies are on the other side, even when we feel that the Jesuit ought to have the best of it, we cannot resist the fascination with which we watch the dexterity of that special pleading, the subtlety of that thought. Every now and then, indeed, we get a passionate outburst which carries us away with it; but usually we look on at the game with the cool delight with which we watch any intellectual treat.

But the subject matter and style of the *Pensées* are very different. There is far less brilliancy and much more depth. There is at times a strange suggestion of scepticism, and there is often a passionate conviction. There is weight and dignity in the longer passages, the eloquence is cumulative and sustained, but always controlled. In Pascal the head is always just a little superior to the heart. The keen logician and man of science is never absent, though the humble Christian is usually present. However in the *Pensées* there is little or no argument, and hence perhaps their appeal to an age such as the present, which, neither in politics nor religion, heeds theory much. Pascal says, I will show you this or that—but he does not do so—he drives you to believe this or that. It is Pascal the man, not Pascal the controversialist who influences you.

And we must guard against the notion that

there is anything slovenly in the detached thoughts, because Pascal left them unarranged. That is not so. They are by no means thoughts dashed off, but rather thoughts written and re-written, pruned down and filled up until everything has been got out of the thought, and everything has been put into a form of language often eloquent, but always vigorous and concise.

Pascal's Religion.

Like Victor Hugo's good bishop, Pascal had much respect for the learned, but still more for the ignorant. Religion with him was a matter of the heart, not of the head. In science he was all for experiment, in religion he was all for authority. But he must be quite clear in his own mind that it is authority. He will not take this or that man's authority that it is authority. He is the Newman of his age, equally brilliant, equally acute and logical, alike humble and submissive to the Church, alike sincere and earnest, but more passionate. The power that is got within him to a passion is a power of consuming fire, to destroy all opposed to him. Pascal sees far inwards and onwards, but he does not look around him. He has the egoistic narrowness of genius and intense conviction.

If it is asked—What was Pascal's religion?

the answer is to be found by the student of Augustine and of Jansenius. In a sense which it is almost difficult to understand nowadays God was all in all to Augustine and to Pascal. In these latter days we find the same idea in Tolstoi; but, by their own confessions, both Tolstoi and Augustine were at one time men of the world. Pascal was never that. He was always religious, though not always set aside for God. His Father, a sort of French James Mill in some of his educational theories and practices, himself taught his only son, who was thereby preserved from the conventional character, while he missed the practical influences of school life. In his early years the lad was so intensely devoted to the acquisition of knowledge that he had not time to be devoted to religion. But Pascal's father was religious, as indeed was the whole family; the boy was well brought up, and performed to the full all the due religious observances with more than the usual fervour. He was a good Christian, as men count it, but not all for Christ.

However, as Madame Perier tells us, at twenty-four he found that "the Christian religion obliges us to live for God only, and to have no other object in life but Him." He could not therefore, with his logical mind, continue his physical and mathematical researches.

The way of this first conversion was as follows. It happened that M. Pascal père fell on the ice and injured his thigh, and that two gentlemen who remained in his house for three months to look after him, introduced the family to the works of Jansenius and others of his school, whereby the whole family was much edified. But the definite conversion had yet to come. Pascal was feeble and overworked. Affections, apparently of the nerves, were increased by the constant pills and purges of the time. At last the doctors advised cessation from all head work, and diversion. Though fearing the allurements of the world, Pascal held that duty called upon him to recover his health, and for a while he lived the ordinary life; but at the age of thirty a sister,[1] whom he had induced to withdraw from the world, induced him in his turn to do the same in a more rigorous way than at any previous period. This was his definite conversion, and from this time he returned no more to the ordinary life, renouncing all pleasures and all superfluities.

Pascal has often been accused of scepticism. He was a reader of few books, but he knew his Montaigne, and Montaigne influenced him. The greatest of essayists was a sceptic, yet hardly in the modern sense of the word. Like Bacon he

[1] The saintly Jacqueline of Port Royal.

was a natural unbeliever, but he professed the Catholic Faith. He thinks it impossible to arrive at certainty, *therefore* let us believe. Pascal has sometimes much the same notion. We must wager a piece on it. It is our best chance. You cannot prove religion. "Scepticism is truth." But when you read Montaigne you feel—here is a man who would not have been a Christian in these days. Not so with Pascal. Christ is in him, is of him. Over and over again he tells us that Religion must come *first*—does not come by argument—through reason. God gives it to you, or He does not give it to you. You start with that—then come I, and support you with my arguments, which are not contrary to reason. And always it is worth remembering that a sceptic nowadays is generally a man who founds his scepticism upon reason, but that the scepticism of Pascal and even of Montaigne was above all sceptical of the power of reason.

A word or two might perhaps be said upon Pascal's view of the Jewish religion. God is a *Deus absconditus*. The whole Jewish religion is but figure, type, a veil set intentionally to cover what God wishes to conceal. If Abraham and Isaac were saved it was because they had charity. The observance of their religion was nothing at all, neither good nor bad. Nothing in this

world can be anything. God is the alone good. Of course, the use of the words type, figure, is common, and half understood; but Pascal's logical, mathematical mind pushes the thought to its utmost limit.

Doctrine.

MAN has fallen, therefore all are infected by the original sin. But the favour of God saves some and condemns others; for God gives His grace to some only. Such was Pascal's belief. Calvin has much the same idea. "All men are not created for the same end, but some are foreordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation." And the doctrine of Baius, the precursor of Jansen, was similar. Baius, Jansen, and Pascal based their belief on that which they supposed to be the doctrine of Augustine, whose authority all the Church admitted. Jansen says, "We do not inquire what men ought to believe on the powers of human nature, or on the grace and predestination of God, but what Augustine once preached with the approbation of the Church, and has consigned to writing in many of his works."

Some doubt has been cast on the fact of Augustine's predestinarianism. But there seems to be no doubt that Jansen believed that Augustine

was a predestinarian, and that Pascal did so too, so far as he studied Augustine, for Pascal studied the Jansenists rather than Augustine.

It is possible that Augustine's view was not a clear one. He always thinks more of men than of doctrine. Pascal's view is perhaps best expressed in the second Provinciale. The passage is worth quoting, as putting in a nutshell the difference between the Jesuit and the Jansenist view: . . . "their difference, touching *sufficient grace*, is that the Jesuits maintain that there is a grace given to men in general, submitted to man's free decision, in such a way that he renders it efficacious or inefficacious at his choice, without any fresh help from God, and without requiring anything on His (God's) side so that it should act effectively—from which it results that they call it *sufficient*, because of itself alone it is sufficient to act; whilst the Jansenists, on the contrary, state that there is no such thing as sufficient grace which is not effectual, that is to say that all those graces that do not decide the will to act effectively are insufficient in respect to action, for they (the Jansenists) say that we never act without *grace, which makes us act.* That is the difference."

Pascal's supposed Provincial writes to him that everyone, even the women, understand his letters. To me this passage seems difficult,

especially after you have thought about it, but not all of the passage. The doctrine of the Jesuits, as here presented, is plain enough; but to thoroughly appreciate the doctrine of the Jansenists would perhaps require long study and a mind particularly adapted to the apprehension of such doctrine. However, one thing is clear. "We never act without grace, which makes us act." Now the Jansenist would certainly hold that not everyone has this grace offered to him. For further on in the same letter Pascal endeavours to prove that the Dominicans and the Jansenists are substantially in agreement on this subject, and that the Dominicans hold that "efficient grace" is "not given to all."

But it would not do to attach sole importance to this apparent agreement of the Jansenists with the Calvinists in the matter of predestination. In the first place the Jansenists undoubtedly held that *they* taught the doctrine of the Church, and that the heresy was on the other side, that of the Jesuits, and this they held though the Church said that they did not teach the doctrine of the Church. Their appeal was from the Church of the day to that which *they* were certain was the doctrine of the Church of the past, an appeal strangely subversive of that authority to which Pascal was so devoted, for what body except the Church is to decide what is the doctrine of

the Church? Yet it should be noted that the Jansenists distinguished "between the authority which asserts or denies a proposition, and that which does the like as to a fact. They refused to the Pope, that is, in this instance, to the Church, the latter infallibility." (Hallam's *Literary Hist.*, vol. iv. p. 31.)

But in the second place, and notwithstanding the casuistry of the Jesuits, which tried to prove the contrary, the principal French Jansenists undoubtedly differed from Geneva in their doctrine as to the real presence in the sacrament. The 16th Provinciale proves, if anything can prove, that this is so. The most important part of it is the list of quotations from Jansenist writers at the commencement, of which two will perhaps be sufficient. (Second letter of M. Arnauld). —"Jesus Christ dwells in sinners who communicate by the real and true presence of his body in their bellies, although not by the presence of his spirit in their hearts,"—and M. de Saint Cyran, approved by M. Arnauld, says in his *Théologie familière*, lesson 15, article 2,—"Is there then bread in the host, and wine in the chalice? No; for all the substance of the bread and that of the wine are taken away to make place for that of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, which alone remains there, veiled in the character and appearance of bread and wine."

But the Jansenists endeavoured not only after primitive doctrine, but also after primitive morals. They would not connive at lax conduct, nor listen to casuistical subterfuges in regard to it. Especially they held that monks and nuns should spend their time in prayer, in fasting, in reading of the scriptures, in mortification of the body, in acts of charity and works of manual labour; and though Pascal never became a monk, this was his course of life after he attached himself to the French school of Jansenists.

The Jansenists and Port Royal.

The Jansenists took their name from Jansen or Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres. His *Augustinus*, published in 1640 after his death, endeavoured to found the Jansenist doctrines of grace and predestination upon the preaching and writings of Augustine. He attacks the Jesuits, and reflects on the Bull of Pius V., which had condemned Baius, his doctrinal predecessor. The Augustinus offended the greater part of the Church; but was supported by several prominent men, especially Antony Arnauld, the learned and pious opponent of the Jesuits. The dispute gradually grew in importance, and in 1649 the University of Paris condemned a series of seven propositions, without however affirming

that they were to be found in the book of Jansen.

But it was generally recognised in the Church that a blow had been struck at Jansenism, and all the more on this account that the condemnation had been pronounced by the University of Paris, an institution not favourably disposed towards the Jesuits.

Of the seven propositions the Jesuits now selected five, and endeavoured to obtain their condemnation at Rome, but Innocent X. was by no means anxious to assert his authority, and indeed he admitted in private conversation that he did not altogether understand the propositions; which is very probable, for the Jansenists, and Pascal in particular, held that it was not necessary to understand all doctrine, you had merely to ascertain what had been the teaching of the Church. But at length the Pope became more confident in his opinions, and, without hearing the other side, the propositions were condemned on May 31, 1653; the Pope expressly stating, however, that he did not condemn the doctrine of efficacious grace (which was held by the Dominicans) nor the doctrine of Saint Augustine.

The Jansenists now took refuge in the declaration that the propositions were not to be

found in the books of Jansen.[1] The position was an awkward one. Most critics held that the rejected doctrines were to be found in Jansen, and candid criticism would almost certainly discover them in Augustine. In fact, we may almost say that if they are in Jansen they are in Augustine, and that if they are in Augustine they are in Jansen. So far as the Jansenists were concerned, the ground was cut from under their feet by the condemnation of the propositions by the French Prelates, and, subsequently by Alexander VII., who had succeeded Innocent X., and whose condemnation expressly stated that the propositions were in Jansen, and were used in the sense intended by Jansen.

It is clear that the Jansenists were dissenters from the Church of *their day*, and in 1655 the Sorbonne expelled Arnauld from the theological faculty, whilst in 1661 there was a general condemnation of the propositions by the clergy.

The French Jansenists centred round the institution of Port Royal. Port Royal was a Cistercian abbey, originally situated near Marly, about eight miles S. W. of Versailles, and

[1] The first four propositions can hardly be appreciated without a subtle theological training. The fifth is as follows:—"There is semi-pelagian error in saying that Christ is dead and that He shed His blood for all men."

founded in 1204 by Mathilde de Garlande, or, as Racine, himself a pupil of the institution, states, by a holy Bishop of Paris, Eude de Sully. In 1223 the Pope granted to the Abbey the privilege of affording retreat to lay persons who did not wish to take permanent vows—a privilege of which Pascal availed himself, as we shall see. The Abbey fell into great irregularities; but in 1608 Marie-Angélique Arnauld became its Abbess, when only sixteen years old, and undertook its reformation. Many were attracted to the institution by her extraordinary virtues, and it grew to such an extent that in 1626 the Community was obliged to quit the valley of Chevreuse, and establish itself in Paris, at the end of the Faubourg Saint-Jacques.

Later on some of the nuns returned to the country residence, and by 1646 both Houses were the centres of a number of schools. But in 1661 the ardent young king, Louis XIV., broke up the *petites écoles*, and dispersed the postulants and novices of both institutions. In 1669 the "peace of the Church" was established by Clement IX.; but the same year Port Royal de Paris was separated from Port Royal des Champs, and put under the management of the Jesuits, with one-third of the total income of the institutions. However, the nuns of the provincial Community proving inflexible, in 1708

Port Royal des Champs was finally suppressed by papal Bull, and the whole property was handed over to the Paris institution; the aged nuns, who had not been allowed to add to their number, being dispersed.

History is chiefly concerned with the Port Royal de Paris, and with the war which it waged against the Jesuits, and, incidentally, against the powers that were. In 1636 Saint Cyran became Director of the Community. His dream was the reform of the Church, a return to primitive doctrine and primitive virtue, the teaching and virtue of Augustine as expounded by Jansen. To the centre which he formed came men of saintly lives and brilliant abilities—Arnauld, Pascal, Nicole, and others.

It is usual to conceive of Pascal as living a monastic life amongst a brotherhood. This, however, was not the case. Though he retired to Port Royal for a while after his second conversion, and possibly at other times, he generally lived in his own house, had his own servants, and saw what company he desired to see, being however on the whole devoted to the teaching and interests of Port Royal, and following the strictest rule of life. He was deeply submissive to his Director, M. de Sacy, who had been assigned to him by M. Singlin, the Director of Conscience of the establish-

ment; but he did not always agree with his comrades, notably in regard to the question of the infallibility of the Pope, which he disputed, while the Jansenist leaders hesitated to go so far. In regard to the Holy Eucharist he held Jesuit doctrine rather than the doctrine ascribed to the Jansenists, and he tells us several times that though Port Royal may suffer, "you cannot touch me." He is a private person with sufficient means, hoping for nothing, wanting nothing.

Liberty of thought in religion usually leads to liberty of thought in politics, and the Port Royalist dissenters who did not agree with the Church of the day, itself a State institution, were suspected of intrigues with the Frondeurs. Neither Richelieu previously, nor Louis XIV., could endure individual opinion in Church or State. No one could in those days. Racine, the most famous pupil of Port Royal, but subsequently historiographer to the King, says: "Quelques grandes principes qu'on eût à Port Royal sur la fidélité et sur l'obéissance qu'on doit aux puissances légitimes, quelque persuadé qu'on y fût qu'un sujet ne peut jamais avoir de justes raisons de s'élever contre son prince, le roi était prévenu que les jansénistes n'étaitent pas bien intentionnés pour sa personne et pour son État; et ils avaient euxmêmes, sans y penser, donné occasion à lui inspirer ces sentiments par

le commerce, quoique innocent, qu'ils avaient eu avec le Cardinal de Retz; et par leur facilité plus chrétienne que judicieuse à recevoir beaucoup de personnes, ou dégoutées de la cour, ou tombées dans la disgrâce, qui venaient chez eux chercher des consolations, quelquefois même se jeter dans la pénitence. Joignez à cela qu'encore que les principaux d'entre eux fussent fort réservés à parler et à se plaindre, ils avaient des amis moins réservés et indiscrets qui tenaient quelquefois des discours très-peu excusables. Ces discours, quoique avancés souvent par un seul particulier, étaient réputés des discours de tout le corps; leurs adversaires prenaient grand soin qu'ils fussent rapportés au ministre ou au roi même."

The above passage is quoted by M. de Sainte-Beuve in his *Port Royal*. It illuminates clearly an important part of the history of the time, and sums concisely the causes of the King's aversion to the Port Royalists; but reference to Madame Perier's *Life of Her Brother* (p. 38), will show that Pascal took no part in political intrigue, and abhorred all change from established authority.

The Miracle of the Holy Thorn.

Though the interest of the Pensées is not at present specially associated with the interest

which attaches to the special thoughts on miracles, it would not be proper to omit all reference to the incident which, as Madame Perier tell us, was the originating cause of Pascal's great work. In his edition of the "Pensées" (p. 17), M. Léon Brunschvigg, one of the latest of Pascal's editors, says: "Voici le récit du miracle, qui a joué un role capitale dans la vie spirituelle de Pascal, tel que le fait Jacqueline Pascal dans une lettre à Mme. Perier, écrite cinq jours seulement après l'événement." "Vendredi, 24 Mars, 1656, M. de La Potherie, ecclésiastique, envoya céans un fort beau reliquaire, où est enchassé, dans un petit soleil de vermeil doré un éclat d'une épine de la sainte couronne. Afin que toute nôtre communauté eût la consolation de le voir avant que de le rendre, on le mit sur un petit autel dans le chœur avec beaucoup de respect, et toutes les sœurs l'allèrent baiser à genoux après avoir chanté une antienne en l'honneur de la sainte couronne, après quoi tous les enfants y allèrent l'une après l'autre. Ma sœur Flavie leur maitresse, qui en était tout proche, voyant approcher Margot, lui fit signe de faire toucher son œil, et elle-même prit la sainte relique et l'y appliqua, sans réflexion néanmoins; chacun étant retiré, on le rendit à M. de La Potherie. Sur le soir, ma

sœur Flavie, qui ne pensait plus à ce qu'elle avait fait, entendit Margot qui disait à une de ses petites sœurs. 'Mon œil est guéri, il ne me fait plus de mal.' Ce ne fut pas une petite surprise pour elle; elle s'approche et trouve que cette petite enflure au coin, qui était le matin grosse comme le bout du doigt, fort longue et fort dure, n'y était plus du tout, et que son œil qui faisait peine à voir avant l'attouchement de la relique, parce qu'il était fort pleureux, paraissait aussi sain que l'autre sans qu'il fût possible d'y marquer aucune différence; elle le presse, et au lieu qu'auparavant il en sortait toujours de la boue ou au moins de l'eau bien épaisse, il n'en sortit rien non plus que du sien propre. Je vous laisse à penser dans quel étonnement cela la mit: elle ne s'en promit rien néanmoins, et se contenta de dire à la mère Agnès ce qui en était, attendant que le temps fît connaître si la guérison est aussi veritable qu'elle le paraît. La mère Agnès eut la bonté de me le dire le lendemain." M. Brunschvigg adds—"Quelques jours après, le 31 mars, M. Dalencé, le chirurgien de Port Royal, vit la jeune fille; il reconnut la guérison pour miraculeuse, et à sa suite tous les médecins que Port Royal consulta certifièrent *que la guérison surpassait les forces ordinaires de la nature* (14 avril). On n'hésita plus, dès lors,

à publier le miracle, qui fut attesté solennellement par les vicaires généraux de l'archevêché de Paris (22 octobre)."

Madame Perier tells us that her daughter, upon whom this miracle was wrought, had suffered from the affliction of the eye, a lacrymal fistula, for three and a half years, and that it had so far progressed that the pus came out not only from the eye, but also from the nose and mouth. Here then we have this well attested miracle, a disease of long standing healed by the almost accidental touch of a splinter from a thorn taken from Christ's crown, and brought into the chapel for the adoration of the congregation. And, curiously enough, there seems to have been no special act of faith.

Pascal was deeply touched by this favour which he considered as granted to himself, and astestifying to the truth of the doctrine aught by Port Royal. Margaret was his god-daughter and specially remembered in his prayers, and it was this event which inspired in him those thoughts on miracles which were the origin of the Pensées. "Comme Dieu," he cried, "n'a pas rendu de famille plus heureuse, il faut aussi qu'il n'en trouve point de plus reconnoissante." The Jesuits could not deny the miracle, since it had been accepted by the Church; but they endeavoured to show that

the miracle was no proof of divine favour to Jansenists as Jansenists, a position which Pascal hotly combated. Racine tells us, but writing thirty-seven years after the events, that the crowd flowed to Port Royal in numbers which increased day by day, and that many more miracles took place. Racine adds, oddly enough, that the miracle of the Holy Thorn was not the only mortification which the Jesuits experienced at this time, for it was at this time that the famous *Lettres provinciales* appeared.[1]

Pascal's friends and books.

During his so-called mundane period Pascal was intimate with the Duc de Roannez and with his sister, and the Duke often visited him in his retirement. It was he too who presided over the Committee of Jansenists which undertook the publication of the Pensées. With Mademoiselle de Roannez Pascal corresponded in the autumn of 1656, and it has been sometimes asserted, apparently without any grounds, that they were in love with one another. It

[1] Mosheim (*Eccl. Hist.*, Bk. iv. Sect. ii. Part i.) speaks of supposed Jansenist miracles in France as late as 1731, especially the celebrated series associated with the bones of Francis de Paris.

may be doubted whether Pascal ever experienced strongly the passion of love. Though human here and there, the greater part of his *discours sur les passions de l'amour*—is as amorous as a proposition of Euclid. The letters to Mademoiselle de Roannez are valuable for quite other reasons than those associated with that passion. Several of them show Pascal in a pleasant light, encouraging his friend in her Christian course with the tender care of a Father in God for his child, and urging that the Christian life has its positive pleasures. "You must not think that the life of a Christian is a life of sadness. We quit pleasures but for greater pleasures," *i.e.* the Christian life itself with all its pains is the greatest pleasure. The sixth letter contains a statement of much interest in regard to Pascal's orthodoxy. "With all my heart I praise that little bit of zeal for union with the Pope that I have found in your letter. The body without the head no longer lives; nor the head without the body. He who separates himself from either is no longer of the body, and belongs no longer to Jesus Christ. . . . I shall never separate myself from communion with him, at least I pray God to grant me this grace, without which I should be lost for ever." [1]

[1] In the sixteenth Provinciale Pascal speaks even more strongly on this point. "My only wish on

In his early life Pascal was well acquainted with the men of science of his day, especially with Descartes, who on one occasion gave him excellent advice as to his health, advising him to stay in bed as long as possible each day, and drink plenty of beef tea. There was, as it seems, some jealousy between the two, and they never became intimate. Of his Jansenist friends enough has been said. His two best friends were his two sisters, especially Jacqueline, Madame Perier, a wife and mother, had scarcely the detachment from the world which Pascal required in his later period. He objects to her that she enjoys the caresses of her children, and now and again speaks of the beauty of her female friends—dangerous talk before lackeys and young people.

But Pascal's genius was self-sufficient. He did not need friends.

Nor did he need many books. Of Greek he knew little. He was no profound student of Augustine; but he knew the Bible almost by heart, and was intimately acquainted with Epictetus and Montaigne. The *Entretien avec M. de Saci* upon the works of these two authors,

Earth is with the only Catholic Church, Apostolic and Roman, in which I wish to live and die, and in communion with the Pope, its sovereign head, and outside which I am quite persuaded that there is no safety."

apparently taken down at the time by M. Fontaine, secretary to M. de Saci, Pascal's Director, was first published in 1728. In it the writer speaks of Pascal as "*n'ayant point lu les Pères de l'Eglise.*" M. de Saci had the habit of adapting his conversation to those with whom he conversed, leading all conversations to God; thus with the surgeon he talked surgery, with the painter painting, with Pascal—Montaigne. M. de Saci is curious. He had always thought one ought not to read Epictetus and Montaigne. What has Pascal to say for these authors? He in turn has something to tell him of Augustine.

It is impossible in the space at my disposal to do more than indicate the heads of the argument. Epictetus has best of all known the duty of man. God is his chief aim. When your wife dies or your son, he would not have you say, I have lost this or that, but, I have given back my wife, my son. For Montaigne, his motto is *Que sais-je?* His is the profoundest scepticism. By his doubt he combats the heretics of his day. Outside belief all is uncertainty. Epictetus would ascertain whether there is a God, and then make him his sovereign good. Montaigne finds that the existence of God cannot be ascertained. So then, if that is so, true good is uncertain. The two authors annihilate one another. Our safest course is to believe the Gospel.

Conclusion.

This little edition does not admit a further extension of these notes. I have sketched in the briefest outline a little of interest in connection with Pascal and his times and his greatest work, the *Pensées*; for full information the reader is especially referred to M. de Sainte-Beuve, *Port Royal*, Book III. But whatever is read, do not let us be distracted by any side issues or subtle disquisitions from the main issue. The age of Louis XIV. had this at least in common with the age of Victoria, the age of Edward VII. It was an age of increasing comfort, of eager and abounding life, and from the midst of it there bursts forth this passionate, this heart-rending cry. It is all nothing. Life is an episode. There is but God, and you, and me. Detach yourselves from your interests. Reject your great schemes. Tear asunder the ties which bind family life together. Come apart into the wilderness awhile, and look things fairly in the face. And what do you find, and what do you see? You only find God. You only see God—and yourself. Live then humbly with your God, alone with him and for him alone, and force men so to live—*on mourra seul.*

TABLE OF DATES

A.D.

1643-1715. Reign of Louis XIV.
1623. Pascal born at Clermont, June 19.
1631. The family withdraws to Paris.
1635. Pascal, aged twelve, discovers for himself the greater part of Euclid, Book I.
1641. He invents the arithmetical machine. Commencement of the bodily pain which was with him every day until his death.
1646. The experiments on the Void and the Weight of Air.
1647. Pascal reads the works of the Jansenists, and renounces human knowledge. So-called *first conversion*.
1648. Acting on medical advice he leaves off headwork and enters the world; is intimate with the Duc de Roannez and others.
1654. So-called *second conversion*, owing to the influence of his sister, Jacqueline.
— Association with Port-Royal.
1656. The *Provinciales* begin to appear.
— Miracle of The Holy Thorn.
— Final condemnation by Pope Alexander VII. of the Five Propositions.
1656-58. The most fertile period of the *Pensées*.
1662. Pascal dies in his sister's (Madame Perier's) house in Paris (No. 22, Rue Neuve Saint-Etienne), August 19.
1670. First edition of the *Pensées*, published by the *Messieurs* of Port-Royal, with an Introduction by Pascal's nephew, Etienne Perier.

LIFE OF BLAISE PASCAL

By Mme. Perier (Gilberte Pascal)

MY brother was born at Clermont, on June the 19th, 1623. My father's name was Étienne Pascal, president of the court of taxes, and my mother was Antoinette Begon. As soon as my brother was old enough to talk, he gave signs of extraordinary intelligence by his replies, which were much to the point; but still more by his questions as to the nature of things, which surprised everybody. This beginning, which gave such good hopes, was never falsified; for, as he grew, his reasoning powers constantly increased, so that he was always far beyond his age.

But my mother dying in the year 1626, when my brother was only three years old, my father, finding himself alone, applied himself with even greater diligence to the care of his family; and, as he had no other son, the fact that he was an only son and the great signs of intelligence which he perceived in the child, made him so fond of him that he could not resolve to entrust his education to another, and he determined himself to educate him from this time forth, as in

fact he did, my brother never having gone to school, nor had any teacher but my father.

In the year 1631 my father retired to Paris, took us there, and made it his home. My brother, who was only eight years old, gained much advantage from this retirement in regard to my father's design of teaching him; for there is no doubt that he would not have been able to devote the same care to him in the country, where his business, and the constant intercourse of society, would have much distracted his attention; but in Paris he was quite free, and he spent his whole time on him, with all the success which would be expected from the care of the most intelligent and affectionate of fathers.

His chief educational maxim was to keep the child always above his work; and this was the reason that he was unwilling to begin instruction in Latin before my brother was twelve years old, so that he might learn it with greater ease.

During this interval he did not leave him idle, for he conversed with him about everything which he saw him capable of understanding. He showed him in general what language was, he pointed out how it had been brought in certain grammars under particular rules; yet that these rules had exceptions, which ought to be carefully noticed; and that by these means the languages of the different countries had been rendered communicable to one another.

This general idea cleared his mind, and made him see the reason of grammar rules; so that, when he came to learn them, he knew why he

was doing it, and applied himself exactly to those things which most required application.

After this teaching, my father gave him more: he often spoke to him of extraordinary natural effects, such as the effect of gunpowder, and of other things, which surprise us when we consider them. My brother took great pleasure in these conversations, but he wanted to know the reason for everything, and why it is that all the reasons of things are not known; and when my father wouldn't tell him, or gave the reasons usually given, which are really only evasions, he was not satisfied, for his intelligence was always admirably wise in discerning error; and I may say that always and in everything truth was his sole object, for never did anything but the knowledge of the truth satisfy him. Thus from childhood he could not submit to anything which did not seem to him evidently true; so that when he wasn't given good reasons, he sought for them himself, and when he had applied himself to the investigation of anything, he never left it until he had found a reason which could satisfy him. For instance, someone happening one day to strike a plate with a knife, he noticed that it gave forth a sound, but that as soon as he put his hand to it, that stopped the noise. He wanted at once to know the reason for this, and this experiment led him to make many more experiments on sounds, about which he noticed so many things, that he wrote a treatise on sound at the age of twelve, which was found to be very well reasoned.

His genius for geometry began to be seen when he was only twelve years old, and that by an incident so extraordinary, that it seems deserving of relation in detail.

My father was clever at mathematics, and conversed about the subject with all those skilled in the science, who often came to his house: but as he intended to teach my brother languages, and knew that mathematics is a science which to a large extent fills and satisfies the mind, he desired that my brother should have no acquaintance with it, fearing that it might make him negligent of Latin, and the other languages, in which he wished to perfect him. For this reason he had locked up all the books which treat of it, and abstained from speaking of it with his friends in his presence; but this precaution did not prevent the child's curiosity being excited, so much so that he often begged my father to teach him mathematics; but he refused, promising to do so as a reward. He promised him that as soon as he knew Latin and Greek he would teach it him. My brother, noticing this disinclination, asked him one day what this science was, and of what it treated; my father replied in general terms that it was the method of making correct figures, and establishing their mutual relations, and at the same time forbade him to speak or think of it any more. But this mind, which would not remain thus restricted, as soon as it had this simple opening, that mathematics supplies the means of making figures infallibly correct, set itself to work to

dream about the matter in its hours of recreation; and, being alone in the room where he was accustomed to amuse himself, he took a piece of charcoal and made figures on the tiles, seeking the means of making, for example, a perfectly round circle, a triangle, the sides and angles of which should be equal, and other similar things. He discovered all this for himself; then he tried to find out the mutual relations of the figures. But, since my father had taken such care to conceal all these things from him, he did not even know the names of the figures. He was constrained himself to make his own definitions, he called a circle a round,[1] a line a bar, and so on with the rest. After these definitions he made for himself axioms, and finally perfect proofs: and, since one advances in these things from one to another, he pushed his researches so far that he reached the thirty-second proposition of the first book of Euclid. Whilst he was engaged on it, my father entered the room where he was, without my brother hearing him, and found him so engrossed, that it was a long while before he perceived his entrance. I can't say which was the more surprised, the son at seeing the father, because he had been expressly forbidden the science, or the father to see the son engaged in these matters. But the surprise of the father was much greater, when, having asked what he was doing, he told him that he was seeking for something, which was the thirty-

[1] A name which clung to his mind, and which he uses in the Pensées and elsewhere.

second proposition of the first book of Euclid. My father asked him what had made him think of that; he replied that it was because he had discovered something else; and hereupon having put similar questions, he told him certain proofs which he had found out, and finally, working back, and still explaining by the names of the round and the bar, he came to his definitions and axioms.

My father was so overwhelmed by the greatness and power of this genius, that, without saying a word, he left him, and went to the house of M. Le Pailleur, who was his intimate friend and a very clever man. When he arrived there, he remained motionless like a man in a transport. M. Le Pailleur seeing this, and seeing too that he let fall several tears, was frightened, and begged him not to conceal from him any longer the cause of his grief. My father replied: "I do not weep for grief, but for joy. You know the pains that I have taken to keep away from my son the knowledge of geometry, for fear of turning him from his other studies; however, this is what he has done." Hereupon he explained to him all he had discovered, by which one might say that he had in some sort invented mathematics. M. Le Pailleur was not less surprised than my father had been, and told him that he did not think it right to keep such intelligence any longer in bondage, and to hide this knowledge from it; that he ought to let him see the books, and not any longer keep him from them.

My father, thinking this right, gave him the elements of Euclid to read in his hours of recreation. These he perceived and understood quite alone, without ever having had need of any explanation; and whilst he was learning them, he kept composing, and went so far, that he regularly attended the conferences which took place every week, at which all the clever men in Paris assembled to bring their works, and examine those of others. In these conferences my brother well maintained his place, as well in criticism as in original work; for he was one of those who most often brought new work to them. At these meetings propositions sent from Italy, from Germany, and from other countries were often discussed, and more heed was taken of his advice than of that of any other, for his intelligence was so bright, that it often happened that he discovered faults which the others had not perceived. However he employed his hours of recreation only in the study of geometry, for he learned Latin by rules which my father had made expressly for him. But since he found in geometry the truth which he had so ardently sought, he was so satisfied with it, that he devoted his whole mind to it, so that, little though he studied it, he advanced so far that at the age of sixteen years he wrote a treatise on conics, which was held so great an effort of mind that they said that no one since Archimedes had had such vivid perception. Clever men considered that the treatise should be printed at once, because they saw that besides

being a work which would always be remarkable, if it were printed at the time when its author was only sixteen years old, this circumstance would add greatly to its fame; but as my brother never had a longing for reputation, he took no notice of this, and thus the work has never been printed.

During all this time he continued to learn Latin and Greek; and, besides this, during and after meals, my father conversed with him sometimes of logic, sometimes of physics, and other branches of philosophy: and this is all that he learnt of these matters, never having been to school, nor had other masters for this any more than for the other things. My father took as great a pleasure as you can imagine in the remarkable progress which my brother made in all the sciences, but he did not perceive that this great and constant application at so tender an age might much affect his health; and, as a matter of fact, it began to be impaired from the time when he reached his eighteenth year. But, as the inconveniences which he experienced then were not yet serious, they did not prevent him from continuing his incessant occupations; and it was at this time that, being eighteen years old, he invented that arithmetical machine by which are made not only all sorts of calculations, without pen and without counters, but without any arithmetical rule and with infallible certainty.

This invention was considered a thing new in kind—to have reduced to a machine a science

which is wholly mental, and to have discovered the means of carrying out operations of the mind, without having need of reasoning. This work greatly fatigued him, not because of the thought required nor of the mechanism, matters which he did not find troublesome, but because of the difficulty of getting the workmen to understand everything; and so he was two years in bringing the machine to its present state of perfection.[1]

But this laborious task, and the delicacy of his health for several years past, wrought injuries which never left him; so that he has often told us that from the age of eighteen he had never passed a day without pain. However, his health varied, and directly he had any rest or release from pain, his mind flew at once to the search after something new.

It was about this time, and at the age of twenty-three, that having seen the experiment of Torricelli, he invented and carried out the other experiments which are called his—namely, that of the vacuum, which so clearly proved that all the results which had been hitherto attributed to the abhorrence of a vacuum, are caused by the weight of the air.[2]

[1] A model of the machine is preserved at the "Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers," bearing the certificate "Esto probati instrumenti signaculum hoc," Blasius Pascal Arvernus, 1652.

[2] The theological notion was that God alone could create a vacuum. Galileo (1) weighed the air: (2) supposed that the abhorrence of a void was confined

This occupation was the last in connection with human science to which he applied his mind; and although he invented the cycloid[1] afterwards, this does not contradict what I say; for he discovered it without thinking of it, and in a way which plainly shows that he took no pains about it, as I shall point out in its place.

Immediately after this experiment, and when he was not yet twenty-four, Providence having brought about an occasion which obliged him to read certain pious writings, God enlightened him in such a manner by this reading that he perfectly understood that the Christian religion requires us to live only for God, and to have no other objective than Him; and this truth seemed to him so clear, so necessary, and so

within certain limits. His pupil, Torricelli, invented the barometer, which showed the effect and variation of atmospheric pressure. Pascal, having access to a glass-house, by experiments with tubes of various lengths, conducted during 1646-1648, at various altitudes, proved (1) that nature does not abhor a vacuum; (2) that a vacuum in a barometer varies with the variation in the weight of the air. Pascal induced a law from the facts of Torricelli and of himself. The attacks of Father Noël, Rector of the Jesuits' College at Paris, and of others of that body, who hinted at heresy, were one of the causes which produced the scathing criticism of the Provinciales. It should be added that an absolute vacuum has never been obtained, though the metaphysical idea of "fuga" or "abhorrence" has long been abandoned.

[1] The ordinary cycloid is a curve traced by a point in the circumference of a circle, as the circle rolls along a straight line. Pascal determined the curve.

advantageous, that it put an end to all his researches, so that from this day he renounced all other knowledge, to apply himself solely to the one thing which Jesus Christ calls needful.[1][2]

He had been hitherto preserved by the peculiar protection of God from all the vices of youth; and, what is still more strange, in the case of a mind of this temper and character, he had never been inclined to licence in religious matters, having always limited his curiosity to things of nature. He has several times told me that he added this obligation to all the rest which he had received from my father, who, having himself a great respect for religion, had inspired in him a similar respect from his childhood, giving him as a maxim that all which is matter of faith should not be matter of reason, and still less should be submitted to reason.[3]

These maxims, which were often repeated to him by a father for whom he had a very great esteem, and in whom he saw great knowledge, together with a very powerful and accurate intelligence, made so great an impression on his mind

[1] Luke x. 42.

[2] In January 1646 Pascal's father, slipping on the ice, put out his thigh. Two Jansenist gentlemen of the district stayed at his house three months to effect a cure, and introduced the family to the works of M. Jansénius, M. de Saint-Cyran, and M. Arnauld. From this time forth the family, always religious, *lived* for religion—for the one thing needful.

[3] Jansénius (Augustinus t. ii., livre préliminaire, chap. iv.), "Différence entre la philosophie et la théologie. Celle-là a pour instrument la raison; celle-ci la memoire."

that he was not in the least influenced by the conversation of free-thinkers; and, although very young, he looked on them as people having this false principle, that human reason is above everything—people who knew not the nature of the Faith; and thus this mind so great, so large, and so full of curiosity, which sought with such care the reason of everything, was at the same time submissive as a child on all matters of religion. He never engaged his mind in curious questions of theology, and devoted all the power of his mind to learn and practice to perfection the Christian morality to which he had consecrated all the talents which God had given him, having done nothing else during all the rest of his life but meditate day and night on the law of God.

Now, although he had made no particular study of the schoolmen, he was not ignorant of the decisions of the Church against those heresies which the subtlety of man's mind has invented, and he was keen against such investigations, and God granted him about this time an opportunity of showing his zeal for religion.

He was at this time at Rouen, where my father was employed in the service of the king, and there was there at the same time a man who taught a new philosophy which attracted all the curious. My brother, being pressed to visit him by two young men of his acquaintance, went there with them; but they were very surprised in the interview which they had with this man, that in telling them the principles of his philo-

sophy he drew consequences from them on points of faith contrary to the decisions of the Church. He proved by his reasonings that the body of Jesus Christ was not formed of the blood of the Holy Virgin, but of another matter expressly created, and several like things. They desired to argue against him, but he remained firm in his opinion. And so having considered together the danger that there was in leaving at liberty to teach youth a man who had erroneous views, they resolved first to warn him, and then to denounce him if he resisted the warning which they gave him. And the matter so turned out, for he despised their warning, that they believed it to be their duty to denounce him to M. du Bellay, who was in charge of the episcopal duty in the diocese of Rouen, under the Archbishop's commission. M. du Bellay sent for this man, and, having questioned him, was deceived by an equivocal confession of faith which he wrote and signed; besides, he did not pay much attention to a notice on a matter of such importance given him by three young men.

However, as soon as they saw this confession of faith they recognised its error, which obliged them to go to Gaillon to find the Archbishop of Rouen, who, having examined into all the matters, found them so important that he wrote a patent at his Council, and gave express orders to M. du Bellay to make this man retract on all the points on which he was accused, and to receive nothing from him but by communication by those who had denounced him. The matter

was thus carried out, and he appeared at the Archbishop's Council, and renounced all his opinions, and we may say that he did so sincerely, for he never showed any animosity against those who had brought about this affair, which makes one think that he was himself deceived by false conclusions drawn from false premises. Now, it is quite certain that in this matter they had no intention to injure him, nor any view but to undeceive him in himself, and to prevent him from seducing young men who might not have been able to discern the true from the false in questions of such subtlety.[1]

Thus this matter ended, and my brother continuing more and more to seek the means of pleasing God, from the age of twenty-four this love of Christian perfection so inflamed him, that it spread through all the house. My father himself, not being ashamed to yield to the teaching of his son, then embraced a more exact manner of life, constantly practising virtue until his death, which was to the fullest extent Christian; and my sister, who had quite extraordinary powers of mind, and a reputation from her childhood which few girls obtain, was so touched by my brother's discourses, that she resolved to renounce all the advantages which she had so loved hitherto, in order to consecrate herself

[1] Pascal appears to have acted in this case with the ardent egoism of youth and genius. On apparently much more important questions, he, later on, differed from the Church of his day, and hotly resented interference.

entirely to God, as she did ever after, having become a nun, in a very holy house,[1] with a very severe discipline, where she made such good use of the perfections with which God adorned her, that she was found worthy of the most difficult tasks, of which she always acquitted herself with all imaginable fidelity, and in which she died holily on October the 4th 1661, aged thirty-six years.

Now my brother, whom God made use of to display in him all His goodness, was worn with constant maladies, which ever increased. But, since now he knew no knowledge but perfection, he found great difference between this science and those which had engaged him hitherto; for, whilst his maladies retarded the progress of that knowledge, this science on the other hand grew perfect during these same indispositions, owing to the admirable patience with which he endured them. To prove this, I shall content myself with a single example.

Amongst other ailments, he was unable to drink any liquid which was not warm, and that only by gulps; but as he had in addition unendurable headache and internal heat, and many other maladies, the doctors bade him purge himself every second

[1] Jacqueline Pascal desired to enter Port Royal in 1647, but her father opposed her inclination. Her father dying in 1651, Jacqueline, through Mme. Perier, approached her brother on the subject. Pascal was vexed, but "Le lendemain matin, sans avoir revu sans frère, elle quittait le monde à vingt-six ans et trois mois." All the Pascals were strong-minded people, each determined to have his or her own way.

day during three months, so he was obliged to take all the medicines, and to heat them, and drink them by mouthfuls, which was a veritable torture to him and sickening to all near him; but he never complained.

The continuation of these remedies, with others which he underwent, brought him some relief, but not perfect health, so that the doctors thought that, in order to re-establish his health entirely, he must cease from all mental application, and seek, as far as he could, opportunities for amusement. My brother hardly consented, fearing the danger of this advice; but at last he followed it, believing himself bound to do all possible to regain his health, and he imagined that respectable amusements could not do him any harm, and therefore he mixed with the world. But, although by God's mercy he was always free from vice, yet, since God called him to great perfection, He would not leave him in the world, and He made use of my sister for that purpose, as formerly He had used my brother, when He had wished to withdraw my sister from her worldly employments.[1]

She was then a nun, and led a life so holy that she edified the whole house; being in this state, she was distressed to see him to whom was due, after God, the grace which she enjoyed, lacking this same grace, and since my brother often saw her, she also often spoke to him; and,

[1] When Pascal became a Jansenist (p. 11), his ardour carried with him his family, already inclining that way.

finally, with such power and sweetness, that she persuaded him of that which he had first persuaded her, to quit the world altogether; so that he decided to cease all conversation with the world, and to retrench in all things unnecessary, even at the peril of his health, because he believed his safety was to be preferred to all else.

He was then thirty years old, and still weak; and from that time to his death, he embraced this mannner of life.

To accommodate himself to this design and to break all his habits, he changed his quarters, and went to live for some time in the country, whence returning, he so clearly showed that he desired to leave the world, that at length the world left him; and he fixed the rule of his life in this retreat by two chief maxims, which were, to renounce all pleasure and all superfluity; and in this practice he passed the rest of his life. In order to succeed, he began from that time, as he did ever after, to do without the attendance of servants, as much as he could. He made his own bed. He went to the kitchen to fetch his dinner and carried it to his room, and then took back the dishes, and, in fine, he only made use of his people to cook, to go into the town, and for the other things which were absolutely necessary. All his time was spent in prayer and reading the Holy Scriptures, in which employments he took incredible pleasure. He said that Holy Scripture was not a science of the mind, but of the heart, unintelligible save to

those whose heart was right, and that all others found in it darkness only.

It was with this disposition that he read, renouncing all light of the mind; and he applied himself to it with such diligence that he knew the whole by heart, so that you could not deceive him in it; for when you quoted anything, he said positively: "That is not in Holy Scripture," or "That is in it"; and then he would tell you the precise place. He also read the commentaries with great care; for the respect for religion in which he had been brought up from his youth was by this time changed into an ardent love and appreciation of all the truths of the Faith, whether those which have to do with the submission of the intellect, or those which are concerned with religious observance in the world, and all religion is within these limits; and this love led him to labour ceaselessly to destroy all which could oppose these truths.

He had a natural eloquence which gave him a wonderful facility in saying what he wanted to say; but he had added rules which had not previously been thought of, and of which he made such advantageous use that he was master of his style, so that he not only said all he wanted to say, but said it in the manner in which he wanted to say it, and his words produced the effect which he desired. And this natural way of writing, at once simple and forcible, was so peculiarly his own, that as soon as his *Lettres au provincial* began to appear,

it was at once seen that they were his, notwithstanding the care which he had taken to conceal the fact, even from those nearest to him. It was at this time that it pleased God to heal my daughter of a lachrymal fistula, which had made such progress in three years and a half, that the pus came out of the eye, as well as of the nose and mouth. And this fistula was so bad that the best surgeons in Paris judged it incurable. However it was healed in a moment by the touch of the Holy Thorn;[1] and this miracle was so authentic, that it has been admitted by everybody, having been attested by famous doctors and by the cleverest surgeons in France, and having been granted authority by a solemn decision of the Church.

My brother was greatly touched by this favour, which he regarded as granted to himself, since it was conferred on a person who, besides her near relationship, was his god-daughter; and great was his consolation to see that God so clearly manifested Himself at a time when faith appeared to be extinguished in the heart of the greater part of the world. His joy thereat was so great that he was pervaded by it, so that, all his mind being occupied with it, God inspired in him an infinite number of admirable thoughts on miracles, which giving him new light on religion, redoubled the love and respect which he had always had for it.

[1] "Cette Sainte Épine est au Port Royal du faubourg Saint Jacques, à Paris." (Note by Mme. Perier.)

And this was the occasion which showed forth his extreme desire to refute the principles and false reasonings of the Atheists. These he had studied with great care, and had employed all his mind in seeking means to convince them. To this task he devoted himself entirely. His last working year was entirely taken up in collecting various thoughts on this subject; but God, who had inspired in him this design and all these thoughts, did not suffer him to bring the matter to perfection, for reasons which are unknown to us. . . .[1]

[. . . There are miracles, there is then something above what we call nature. The consequence is a matter of common sense; you have but to assure yourself of the certainty of the truth of the miracles. Now there are rules for this which are also a matter of common sense, and these rules hold true of the miracles of the Old Testament. These miracles then are true; thus there is something above nature. But these miracles have beside the note of divine authorship, and in particular those of the New Testament (show) that He who wrought them was the Messiah Whom men should expect. Thus, as the miracles of both Old and New Testament prove that there is a God, those of the New in

[1] The passage in brackets which follows is from *l'Histoire de l'abbaye de Port-Royal*, by the Abbé Besonge, who states that he copies it word for word from Mme. Perier's Life of Pascal. It appears to have been at first contained in the Life, and subsequently suppressed.

particular prove that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah.]

All this he unravelled with admirable clearness, and when we heard him speak, and he developed all the circumstances in the Old and New Testament with which these miracles were reported, they seemed clear to us. You could neither deny the truth of these miracles, nor the consequences which he drew from them as proof of God and of the Messiah, without shocking the commonest principles on which things always held indubitable are grounded. Something of these thoughts has been collected, but it is little, and I should hold myself obliged to extend the collection, if one of his friends had not given us a dissertation on them, in his book on the Works of Moses, in which the whole matter is admirably explained, in a way which would not have been unworthy of my brother.[1]

I send you then to this work, and I merely add that my brother's reflections on miracles gave him much new light on religion. As all truths are interdependent, it was enough for him to apply himself to one, the others crowded upon him, and unfolded themselves to his mind in a way which, as he often told us, transported him out of himself. And this was the occasion which roused him against the Atheists, so that, seeing that God had given him the wherewithal to confound them utterly, he applied himself to

[1] The reference is to the *Discours sur les Pensées de M. Pascal et sur les livres de Moïse* of M. de la Chaise, printed at the end of the Pensées in 1672.

this task, so that the parts of the work which have been collected make us deeply regret that he was not able to collect them himself, and, with all which he could have added, compose a book of completed beauty. Assuredly he was very capable of doing this; but God, who had granted him all the intelligence needed for so great a task, did not give him health enough to bring it to perfection.

He endeavoured to show that the Christian religion had as many marks of certainty as the things which are received in the world as most indubitable. For this end he did not make use of metaphysical proofs, &c.

(Here are reproduced, almost word for word, the Pensées contained in chapter xx. of the Port Royal edition. Several of these thoughts are in the short chapter xxii. of this selection. Madame Perier then proceeds—)

In the proofs which my brother was to give of God and the Christian religion, he desired to say nothing which would not be within the reach of all those for whom they were destined, nor in which people would not be interested, either through themselves, feeling all that, good or bad, to which he called their attention, or through clearly seeing that they could not take a better nor more reasonable side than the belief that there is a God whom we should enjoy, and a Mediator who, having come to make us deserve His grace, begins even in this life to make us much happier than we could be with all which the world promises us, by means of the virtues

with which he inspires us, and gives us the assurance that we shall be perfectly happy in heaven, if we deserve it by following the ways which He showed us, and which He followed Himself.

But, although he was persuaded that all that he had to say upon religion in this direction would have been very clear and very convincing, he did not think that he was required to convince those who were indifferent, and who, not finding in themselves illuminating and persuasive light, neglected to seek it elsewhere, and especially in the Church, where it shines so brightly; for he fixed these two truths as certain, that God has given perceptible notes of religion, especially in His Church, whereby to make Himself known to those who sincerely seek Him, and yet that He has hidden them in such a way that He shall not be perceived but by those who seek Him with all their heart.

And this is why, when he had to converse with any Atheists, he never began by disputing, nor by fixing certain principles, but he wished first to know whether they were seeking the truth with all their heart; and he often brought this before them, either to aid them to find the light which they had not, if they were seeking it sincerely, or to dispose them to seek it, and to make that their most serious occupation, before he should instruct them, if they desired his instruction to be of use to them.

It was his infirmities which hindered him from working out his design further. He was

thirty-four years old when he began to apply himself to it. He employed a whole year in preparing himself for it, so far as his other occupations permitted him, by collecting the different thoughts which occurred to him; and at the end of the thirty-fifth year of his age and the fifth of his retirement, he fell back into such overpowering indisposition that he could do no more during the four remaining years of his life, if one could call life the pitiable languor in which he passed his days.

However, the retirement from the world, which he carried out with such care, did not hinder him from often seeing people of intelligence and position, who, thinking of going into retreat, asked his advice and followed it minutely; and others, who were exercised in matters of faith, and who, knowing that he had great light, came to consult him, and always returned satisfied, so that all these persons who at present live a specially Christian life bear witness to-day, that all the good they do is due to his advice and counsel, and the light which he gave them.[1]

The conversations in which he often found himself engaged did not fail to make him fear somewhat, that they might cause him to run some risk; but since he could not in conscience refuse the help which these people asked of

[1] M. Arnoul (de Saint-Victor) dit que, quand on demandait conseil à M. Pascal, il écoutait beaucoup et parlait peu. (Lettres, opuscules, &c., p. 471.) (Note by M. Havet.)

him, he had found a remedy for this. On these occasions he wore an iron girdle, covered with points, upon his bare flesh, and, when there came to him any thought of vanity, or when he took any pleasure in the place in which he was, or any such thing, he struck it with his elbow to increase the hurt of the points, and thus to remind him of his duty. This practice seemed to him so useful that he continued it to his death; even during the last days of his life, when he was in constant pain, and because he was not able to read or write, and was constrained to continue without doing anything and to go out for walks, was in continual fear that this lack of occupation might turn him from his views. We only learnt all these things after his death from a person of very great virtue who confided much in him, to whom he had been obliged to tell it for reasons connected with herself.

This rigour which he exercised on himself was the result of that important rule of renouncing all pleasure, on which he had founded the whole regulation of his life.

From the commencement of his retirement he did not fail to practise minutely that other rule which obliged him to renounce all superfluities, for he retrenched with such care everything not necessary, that, little by little, he reduced the upholstery in his room to nothing, because he thought it unnecessary, not being compelled to it either by propriety, because there only came to him the persons to whom he ceaselessly recom-

mended retrenchment, so that they were not surprised that he lived himself in the way in which he advised others to live.

This is how he passed five years of his life, from thirty to thirty-five, working ceaselessly for God, for his neighbour, and for himself, trying to perfect himself more and more, and one might say in a way that that was all his life, for the five years that God gave him afterwards were but continued infirmity. It was not exactly any new disease, but a double access of the indisposition to which he had been liable from his youth. But he was attacked by it then with such violence that he at last succumbed to it; and during all this time he was not able to work for a moment at this great work which he had undertaken for religion, nor to aid the persons who addressed themselves to him for advice, either by word of mouth or by writing, for his illness was so severe that he could not satisfy them, however great his desire to do so.

This renewal of his complaint began with a toothache, which entirely deprived him of sleep. In his long night-watches there came to him one night, without design, some thoughts on the cycloid. These thoughts were followed by others, and finally, thought crowding on thought, showed him, as though in spite of himself, and to his own surprise, the working out of everything. But as he had long ago renounced all this kind of knowledge, he did not propose to commit the matter to writing;

however, happening to speak of it to a person to whom he owed all deference, both of respect and in recognition of the affection with which he honoured him, this person who is as considerable for his piety as for his eminent qualities of mind and the greatness of his birth,[1] having formed hereupon a design which only regarded the glory of God, thought it proper that he should make use of it, and print the work. It was then only that he wrote it, but with extreme haste, in eight days, writing whilst the printers composed, and providing at the same time two copies of two different treatises, without himself ever having had any copy but that which was written for printing — a thing unknown till six months afterwards, when it was discovered.

However, his infirmities still continuing, without giving him a moment's release, reduced him, as I said, to incapacity for work, and for seeing anybody, so to say. But if they prevented him from serving the public and his private friends, they were not useless for himself, and he endured them with so much peace and patience, that there is reason to believe that God willed thus to make him such as He wished him to appear in His presence; for, during this long illness, he never turned from his views, always bearing in mind these two grand rules, the renunciation of all pleasure and of all superfluity. At the height of his disorder he practised these rules, constantly keeping watch over his senses, and

[1] The *Duc de Roannez*.

absolutely refusing them all which was agreeable to them; and when necessity constrained him to do something which might give him some satisfaction, he had a wonderful skill in detaching his mind from it, so that it should have no part in it; for example, his constant maladies compelled him to feed delicately, and he took great pains not to taste what he ate, and we noticed that whatever pains we took to find him something nice, in consequence of his dislikes, he never said, "Ah, that is good"; and besides, if he was served with something new, according to the season, if he was asked after the meal whether it was good, he replied simply, "You should have told me before, for I assure you I never noticed." And, when anyone happened to praise any dish in his presence, he would not endure it, he called that sensual, even if it was only ordinary food; for he said that it was a sign that they ate to satisfy the palate, which was always a bad thing to do.

To avoid falling into this error, he never allowed any sauce or ragout, not even orange or verjuice sauce, nor anything at all which excites appetite, although naturally he liked all these things. And, to keep himself in strict bounds, he had taken care to ascertain, from the beginning of his retirement, what his stomach required; and, after that, he had made rules as to all he required to eat, so that, however hungry he might be, he never went beyond that, and, however much he disliked it, he must eat that; and when he was asked the reason for this constraint,

he said that he must needs satisfy his stomach and not his appetites.

The mortification of his senses not only caused the curtailment of all that was agreeable, but also made him never refuse anything because it was unpleasing to them, whether it were in the way of food, or of medicine. For four years he took broth without ever showing the least dislike; he took everything that was ordered for his health, however unpleasant, without any difficulty; and when I was surprised that he did not make the least objection to taking these things, he laughed at me, and said he could not understand how anyone could object to take medicine, when once he had been told that it was nasty, and that nothing but compulsion or surprise could produce this result. Thus, then, he laboured for mortification without ceasing.[1]

He had so great a love for poverty that it was always with him, in such a way that as soon as he wished to undertake anything, or that anyone asked advice of him, his first thought was whether there was opportunity for poverty. One of the things on which he most carefully examined himself was that fancy for wishing to excel in everything, such as to make use in everything of the best workman, and so forth. He

[1] It is odd that, with his logical mind, he did not see that appetite and pleasing the palate were as natural as the stomach itself; also that these continual mortifications made him ill, and unfit to glorify God by work, an illness probably increased by the constant Doctors' stuff.

would not permit the careful choice of conveniences, so as to have everything at hand; and a thousand things that other people do without any scruple, thinking them no ill. But he did not judge in the same way, and told us that there was nothing so capable of quenching the spirit of poverty as this curious search after what is convenient, this sense of decorum which induces us to wish always to have the best and the best made; and he told us that we should always choose the poorest workmen and the best men, and not choose that excellence of workmanship which is never necessary, and which can never be advantageous. Sometimes he would exclaim, "If my heart were as poor as my mind, I should be very glad; for I am marvellously persuaded that poverty is a great means of gaining safety."

This love of poverty made him so tenderly love the poor that he never refused alms, although he gave them of his need, having little wealth, and being obliged to spend in excess of his income because of his ailments. But when we would represent this to him, when he gave away some considerable sum, he was displeased and said, "I have noticed that, however poor one may be, something is always left at death." Thus he closed our mouths; and he was sometimes so much in advance of his income that he was obliged to borrow money at interest, through having given to the poor all he had, and being unwilling to trouble his friends.

When the affair of the carriages was started,[1] he told me that he wanted to ask for a thousand francs in advance from the financiers concerned, if they would agree, for they were men of his acquaintance, to send to the poor of Blois;[2] and as I told him that the business was not safe enough for that, and that he must wait another year, he at once replied that he saw no great inconvenience, for if it failed he would make it up from his means, and that he did not like to wait till next year, because the need was too pressing to admit of the charity being deferred. And as he could not come to an agreement with these people, he could not carry his resolution into effect, all which made us see what he had said so many times, that he only desired wealth in order to assist the poor out of it; since at the very time when God gave him hopes of getting it, he commenced to distribute it in advance, even before he was sure of getting it. His charity towards the poor was always very great;

[1] Pascal, with the assistance of the Duc de Roannez, the Marquis de Crenan and others, started, for the benefit of the poor, the first omnibuses in Paris. In a lively letter (*v.* Blaise Pascal—Opuscules et Pensées par M. Léon Brunschvicg, p. 247), Mme. Perier describes to Arnauld de Pomponne, the Jansenist Foreign Secretary of Louis XIV., the success and *éclat* of the affair. The 'buses were crowded, and on the afternoon of the first day "il y alla même plusieurs femmes," and on the third day the King said at the Louvre, "et notre route (*i.e.* the rue Saint-Honoré), ne l'établirez-vous pas bientôt?"

[2] In the winter of 1662 there was terrible distress in the neighbourhood of Blois.

but towards the end of his life it was redoubled, so that I could no longer satisfy him without talking of them. During four years he urgently bade me consecrate myself to the service of the poor, and bring up my children also in that way. And when I said that I feared lest this might divert me from the care of my family, he told me it was only want of good will, and, since there are various degrees in this virtue, that I could easily practise it in such a way as not to hurt my domestic affairs. He said it was the general vocation of Christians, and that there needed no special sign to know whether one were called to it, for that was certain; that hereby Jesus Christ will judge the world;[1] and that, when we consider that the omission of this virtue only is cause of damnation, this thought alone was enough to urge us to despoil ourselves of all, if we had faith. He told us also that visiting the poor is extremely useful, for this reason, that, constantly seeing the misery in which they are overwhelmed, and that, even in the extremity of their illnesses, they lacked the most necessary things; that, after this, one must be very hard-hearted not to deprive oneself voluntarily of things useless and superfluous.

All these discourses sometimes induced us to propose means for finding general rules which would be applicable to all requirements; but of this he did not approve, and he said we were not called to deal with generalities, but with particular cases; and that he believed the means

[1] Matt. xxv. 40, 45, 46.

most pleasing to God was to serve the poor in a poor way, that is to say, according to one's power, without filling one's mind with those great designs which tend to that superiority, the search after which he blamed in everything. Not that he thought ill of the establishment of public hospitals; on the contrary he was favourably disposed towards them, as he showed by his will;[1] but he said that these great undertakings were reserved for certain persons for whom God destined them, and whom he led, so to say, visibly, to undertake them; but they are not the general vocation of everybody, as is the daily, individual assistance of the poor.

That is part of the instruction which he gave us in order to urge us to the practice of this virtue, which held so great a place in his heart. It is a slight instance of the greatness of his character. His purity was no less; and for this virtue he had so great a veneration that he was constantly on his guard to prevent any injury to it in himself or in others; and it is incredible how precise he was on this point. I was myself in fear about the matter, for he found something to blame in remarks of mine which I thought very innocent, but in which he showed me faults that I should never have seen but for the notice which he took of them. If I happened to say that I had seen a handsome woman, he was vexed, and told me that I ought never to say such things before servants or children, for I

[1] In which he left legacies to the public hospitals of Paris and Clermont.

knew not what thoughts I might excite in them by so doing. Nor would he allow the caresses which I received from my children, and he told me that I ought to discourage them, and that they must harm them, and that they could show their tenderness in a thousand other ways. Thus he instructed me in this matter, and such was his vigilance for the preservation of purity in himself and in others.

About three months before his death there occurred an incident which proved this very clearly, and which at the same time showed the greatness of his charity. As he was returning one day from mass at Saint-Sulpice, a young and very beautiful girl about fifteen years old came up to him and asked an alms; he was touched to see one exposed to so evident a danger. He asked her who she was, and what compelled her to seek alms; and having found that she came from the country, and that her father was dead, and that her mother was ill, and had been taken that very day to the hospital, he believed that God had sent her to him as soon as ever she was in need; and from that very hour he took her to the College for the Clergy, where he put her under charge of a good priest to whom he gave money, and begged him to have care for her, and to put her in the way of being looked after because of her youth, and in a place where her virtue would be secure. And to help him, he said he would send him next day a woman to buy clothes for her, and all that was needed to fit her out for service with a mistress.

Next day he sent a woman, who, together with the good priest, took such pains, that, after having fitted her out, they got her a good situation. And this clergyman, having asked the woman the name of him who had done this charitable act, she told him that she was not allowed to mention it, but that she would come from time to time to see him and provide for the maiden's need, and he begged her to get leave from him to tell his name. "I assure you," he said, "that I will never speak of it during his life; but if God permits him to die before me, I should have the consolation of declaring his act, for I think it so fine an act, that I cannot allow it to be forgotten." Thus, by this single incident, this good clergyman, without knowing him, judged how great was his charity and his love for purity. He loved us much, but this affection did not go so far as to attach him to us. Of this he gave clear proof at the death of my sister, whose death preceded his by ten months. When he received the news of it, he only said, "May God in His grace grant us so good a death!" and ever after he kept himself in admirable submission to the orders of God's providence, only remarking on the great grace of God to my sister during her life, and the circumstances of the time of her decease, which made him say again and again: "Happy are those who die, if only they die to the Lord!" [1]

And when he saw me ever grieved for this

[1] Rev. xiv. 13.

loss which I felt so much, he was sorry, and said it was not well, and that we ought not so to feel the death of the just, but, on the contrary, to praise God that He had so highly rewarded her for her slight services to Him.

Thus he showed his detachment even from those whom he loved; for had he been capable of being bound to any of them, it would undoubtedly have been to my sister, for assuredly she was the person whom he loved most in the world. But he did not stop there, for not only was he detached from others, but he wished others to be detached from him. I do not speak of sinful and corporal bonds, which are gross, as everyone understands; but I speak of the most innocent friendships. In these matters specially he preserved a regular rule, so as to give no grounds for such attachment, and even to ward it off; and as I did not know this, I was very surprised at the way in which he rebuffed me sometimes, and I told my sister about it, complaining to her that my brother did not love me, and that my presence seemed to annoy him, even when I gave him my services in his infirmities. But my sister said that I deceived myself in the matter, that she knew the contrary, that he had for me as great affection as I could desire. Thus my sister restored my mind, and I was not slow to see signs that she spake true; for as soon as an occasion occurred on which I had need of my brother's help, he embraced it with so much care and with such proofs of affection, that I had no room to

doubt that he loved me much, so that I attributed to the troubles of his illness the coldness with which he received the pains which I took to amuse him; and this enigma was only explained on the day of his death, when a person remarkable alike for ability and piety, with whom he had often held converse on the practice of virtue, told me that he had given him this direction amongst others, never to suffer anyone to become attached to him—that this was a fault on which we do not examine ourselves enough, because we do not enough perceive its greatness, and that we do not consider that in permitting and fomenting these attachments, we occupy a heart which ought to be for God alone, and steal from Him the thing which is the most precious thing in the world to Him. And we can well see how constantly this principle was before his heart, for, to have it always present there, he had written with his own hand these words on a little bit of paper: "It is not right that people should attach themselves to me, though they do it with pleasure and of their own accord. I should deceive those in whom I should give birth to this desire, for I am no man's end, and have not wherewith to satisfy them. Am I not to die? So, then, the object of their attachment will die. How blamable I should be to make people believe a falsehood, though I should persuade them without effort, and they believed it with pleasure, and gave me pleasure in the belief; yet I should be blamable should I lead people to love me and to attach themselves to

me. I ought to warn those ready to consent to the lie not to believe it, whatever advantage might come to me from it, and that they should not attach themselves to me, for they must pass their lives in pleasing God and taking heed unto Him, or seeking so to do." [1]

You see, then, how he taught himself, and how well he practised his own teaching, so that I myself was deceived. By these evidences of his practices, which have come to our knowledge by accident, we can see part of the light which God gave him to perfect him in Christian life.

He had so great a zeal for the glory of God that he could not endure that it should be injured in any way. This was what rendered him so ardent in the service of the king that he was against every one at the time of the troubles in Paris, and ever since he called mere pretexts all the reasons which were given to excuse this rebellion. He said that in an established Republic like Venice it was a great evil to help to put a king there, and to oppress the liberty of a people to whom God has given liberty; but that, in a State in which the Royal power is established, it is a kind of sacrilege to violate the respect due to it, for not only is it an image of the power of God, but it is a participation in

[1] See p. 185.

M. Faugère states that a copy of this note is still preserved, endorsed—"Mme. Perier has the original of this note." M. Cousin publishes a letter from Pascal to Mme. Perier on the subject of her daughter Jacqueline's proposed marriage, "the most perilous and lowest" condition of Christianity.

this same power, and we cannot oppose it without visibly resisting God's command; thus then we cannot exaggerate the greatness of this fault, besides the fact that it is always accompanied by civil war, which is the greatest sin that can be committed against the charity due to one's neighbour. And he so sincerely kept this rule that he refused at that time considerable advantages, so as not to fail in it. It was his habit to say that to his mind this crime was as bad as murder or highway robbery, that nothing was so contrary to his nature, or offered less temptations to him.[1]

These were his opinions in regard to the service of the king, and he was irreconcilable with those who opposed them; and that which shows that it was not by temperament or through attachment to these sentiments, is that he had a marvellous tenderness towards those who offended against himself, so that he never made any difference between them and others, and forgot so absolutely what only concerned himself that they had difficulty in recalling it to his recollection, and had to state the circumstances in order to do so. And when we wondered sometimes at that he said: "Don't be surprised, it is not through virtue, but real forgetfulness. I don't remember anything about it." However, we can certainly see that offences which only regarded himself made little impression on him, since he forgot them so easily, for his memory was so excellent that he often said that he

[1] See Introduction, p. xxviii.

had never forgotten anything he wanted to remember.

He practised this gentleness in enduring unpleasantness to the end; for, but a little before his death, having been offended in a matter regarding which he was very sensitive, by a person who was under great obligations to him, and having at the same time received a service from this person, he thanked him with so many compliments that he was quite confused; yet it was not out of forgetfulness, for it was at the same time, but that as a matter of fact he had no resentment for offences which only concerned himself.

All these dispositions, of which I have noticed the particulars, will be seen in short in a description which he has given of himself in a little note written by his own hand after the following manner:

"I love poverty because Jesus Christ loved it. I love means because they enable me to assist the wretched. I keep faith with every one. I do not render evil to those who render it to me; but I wish for them a condition like mine, in which we receive not ill nor good from men. I try to be just, true, sincere and faithful to all men, and I feel tenderly towards those to whom God has closely united me; and, whether alone, or in the sight of men, in all my actions I look to God, Who must judge them, and to Whom I have consecrated them all. Such are my feelings; and all the days of my life I bless my Redeemer, Who has put these feelings in me,

and Who, of a man full of feebleness, of misery, of lust, of pride and of ambition, has made a man exempt from all these evils, by the power of His grace, to which all glory is due, having in me but misery and error."

Thus was he pictured by himself, and having constantly before his eyes the way by which God led him, he could never turn aside from it. This exceptional light, joined to the greatness of his intelligence, did not prevent a wonderful simplicity, which appeared in all the course of his life, and which rendered him exact in all the practices of religion. He loved and appreciated the divine services, but especially the *petites heures*, because these are made up from Psalm cxviii., in which he found so much to admire that his delight was to recite it.[1] When he conversed with his friends about the beauty of this Psalm, he became transported out of himself, as it were. And meditating on it had made him so sensible of all things by which one can try to honour God, that he neglected

[1] The "*petites heures*" are *prime* (6 A.M.), *tierce* (9 A.M.), sexte (noon), *none* (3 P.M.), as opposed to the more important matins, lauds, etc. The Psalm referred to is Psalm cxix. of the English version. M. Hamon, the Port Royalist, wrote of it: "Les gémissements d'un cœur chrétien, exprimés dans les paroles du psaume cxviii." But it is throughout descriptive rather of the absolute absorption of the Christian in the thought and being of God. *Cf.* v. 97—"O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day." And v. 105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Such verses exactly express Pascal's constant sentiments.

none of them. When, as happens in many places, verses were sent him every month,[1] he received them with admirable respect, and repeated his verse every day; and in the four last years of his life, as he could not work, his principal diversion was to visit the churches where there were relics to be seen, or some solemn sight; and for this purpose he had a spiritual almanac which told him the places where there were special services; and all this he did so devoutly and so simply that those who saw him were surprised at it, which gave occasion for this fine remark of a very virtuous and enlightened person: That in great wits God's grace is seen in little things, and in small wits in big things.

This fine simplicity appeared when people spoke to him of God or of himself, so that, the day before his death, an ecclesiastic, a man of great virtue,[2] having come to see him, at his desire, and having spent an hour with him, departed so edified, that he said to me, "Go, comfort yourself, if God call him, you will have good reason to praise Him for His grace to him. I had always much admired the great things in him, but I had not hitherto remarked the great simplicity that I have just now seen. This is incomparable in a mind such as his. I wish with all my heart I was in his place."

[1] Such as the following from a composition of fifty-one paragraphs by Jacqueline Pascal. "Jésus meurt tout nu; cela m'apprend à me dépouiller de toutes choses."

[2] M. de Sainte-Marthe of Port Royal.

The Curé of Saint-Étienne, who visited him in his illness, saw in him the same thing, and was for ever saying—This is a child. He is humble, submissive as a child. This same simplicity made us quite free to advise him of his faults, and he yielded himself without resistance to such warnings. The extreme vivacity of his mind sometimes made him so impatient that he was not easily satisfied; but when he was told of this, or when he perceived that he had vexed anyone by his impatience, he at once repaired the fault by such gentle conduct and by so many kindnesses that he never lost any friend through it.[1] I am trying to be as concise as I can, otherwise I should have had many particulars to give of each of the things which I have noticed, but, since I must not extend my limits, I come to his last illness.

It began by a strange disgust which came upon him two months before his death. His doctor advised him to abstain from solid food, and purge himself. Whilst in this condition he performed an action of remarkable charity. He had at his house a good man and his wife and family, to whom he had given a room, and whom he provided with wood, all out of charity, for he exacted no other service of them than not to be left alone in the house. This good man had a son, who, having fallen ill just then of small-pox, my brother, who had need of my help, feared that I might be afraid to go to his house

[1] Jacqueline speaks of the *humeur bouillante* of her brother.

because of my children. This obliged him to consider how to separate himself from the invalid, but as he feared that he might be endangered if he was taken out of the house in this condition, he preferred to quit the house himself, although he was already very ill, saying—There is less danger for me in this change of domicile, that is why I ought to go. And so he left the house on June 29 to come to us,[1] and never entered it again, for three days afterwards commenced so violent an attack of colic, as entirely to take away his sleep. But, as he had great mental power and great courage, he endured his sufferings with admirable patience. He failed not to rise every day and himself take his remedies, not being willing to permit anyone to render him the smallest service. The doctors who attended him saw that his pain was great, but, as his pulse was strong, without any alteration or appearance of fever, they declared that there was no danger, even making use of these words—There is not the least shadow of danger. Notwithstanding this remark, seeing that the continuation of his sufferings and his long watchings enfeebled him, on the fourth day of his colic, and even before he took to his bed, he sent for the curé, and was confessed. This was reported amongst his friends, and led several to come and see him, owing to their fears. The doctors too were so surprised that they could not help showing it, saying that it was a mark of apprehension which

[1] At the present day, No. 22 Rue Neuve Saint-Étienne.

they did not expect from him. My brother, seeing the disturbance which had been caused, was sorry about it, and said to me—I should have liked to receive the communion, but, since I see that people are surprised at my being confessed, I should fear that they might be still more surprised, so we had better put it off—and the curé being of the same opinion, he did not communicate. However, his illness continued, and when the curé came to see him from time to time, he took one of these opportunities to be confessed, and said nothing about it for fear of frightening people, for the doctors still declared that there was no danger from his illness; and in fact he did have some ease of pain, so that he got up sometimes, but kept his room. But he was never quite free from pain, and sometimes suffered as much as previously, and besides he grew very thin, which did not frighten his doctors much; but, whatever they said, he always said that he was in danger, and did not fail to confess every time that the curé called. About this time he made his will, in which the poor were not forgotten, and his inclination was to give more, for he told me that if M. Perier had been in Paris, and had consented to it, he would have disposed of all his goods in favour of the poor; his mind and heart were full of the poor, and sometimes he said to me—Whence comes it that I have done nothing for the poor, although I have so great a love for them? And I said—Because you have never had means enough to give them much assistance. And he

replied—Since I had not money to give them, I should have given them my time and my labour; but I have failed in this, and if the doctors say true, and God permits release from this illness, I am resolved to have no other employment nor occupation all the rest of my life but the service of the poor. And these are the sentiments in which God took him.

During his illness he joined to this ardent charity a patience so admirable that it edified and surprised all the persons who were around him, and he said to those who manifested their pain at seeing him in the state in which he was, that he had no pain about it, and that he was even apprehensive of being cured, and when they asked him why, he said: Because I know the dangers of health and the advantages of sickness. To the loudest of these complainers he said, when they grieved at beholding his sufferings: Do not pity me; sickness is the appropriate condition of Christians, because in it we are as we ought always to be—in a state of endurance of ills, of deprivation of all advantages, and of all pleasures of sense, of exemption from all the passions which torment us during the whole course of life, without ambition, without covetousness, in constant expectation of death. Is it not thus that Christians ought to pass their lives? And is it not great good fortune when we find ourselves of necessity in the condition in which one is bound to be, and when we have nothing to do but to submit humbly and peaceably? This is why I ask nothing else but to pray God that

He would grant me this grace. In such mind did he endure his sufferings. He earnestly desired to take the communion, but the doctors opposed it, saying that he could not take it fasting, except in the night, which he did not think right unless necessary, and to communicate *in viaticum* one should be in great danger, and since he was not in this condition, they could not counsel him to do it. He was vexed at their opposition, but was induced to yield to it. However, his colic still continuing, he was directed to drink certain waters, which gave him much comfort, but on the sixteenth day of this treatment, which was the 14th of August, he experienced much giddiness with great headache; and although the doctors expressed no surprise at this, and declared that it was merely the gas from the waters, he did not fail to confess, and was instant in his requests to be allowed to communicate, and that in God's name they should discover some means for remedying the objections hitherto alleged; and he was so eager about it that one who was present reproached him for his anxiety, saying that he ought to yield to the feelings of his friends, that he was getting better, and had no longer much colic, and that, since he merely suffered from these vapours, it would not be right to bring him the holy sacrament; that it would be better to put it off until he could take the sacrament at church. To this he replied: You don't feel my illness, and you will be deceived. My head aches in a way that is quite extraordinary. Yet seeing

so great an opposition to his wish, he did not venture to speak more of it; but he said: Since you are unwilling to grant me this grace, I should wish to supply its place by some good deed, and, being unable to communicate in Christ, the head, I greatly desire to communicate in His members,[1] and in order to do so, I have thought of having here at home a poor, sick person to whom the same services may be rendered as to me, of whom great care may be taken, and between whom and me there may be no difference, so that I may have this comfort, that some poor person is as well looked after as I am, confused as I am to find myself so abundantly well supplied with all things. For when I think that whilst I am so well off, there is an infinite number of poor people more ill than I am, and lacking the barest necessaries, I can hardly bear the pain of the thought of it, and I entreat you to try and get a poor, sick man from the curé for this purpose.

I sent at once to the curé, who replied that there was no one in fit state to be removed, but that so soon as he was well a means of exercising this charity should be given him by handing over to him an old man, of whom he should take charge for the rest of his life, for the curé did not doubt that he would get well.

Since he saw that he could not have a poor man in his house with him, he begged me to do

[1] *i.e.* to communicate is to receive Christ, to receive a poor person is to receive one of Christ's members. *Cf.* Matt. x. 40: "He that receiveth you receiveth me."

him the favour of sending him to the hospital for incurables, for he longed to die among the poor. I told him that the doctors did not think him in a fit state to be moved, which much troubled him, and he made me promise that, if he got a little better, I would grant him this satisfaction.

However the pains in the head increased, and were endured, as he endured all his other sufferings, without complaint; and one day, in the height of his pain, it was the 16th of August, he begged me to arrange a consultation; and yet he had scruples about it, and said: I fear I am too anxious and particular. But I did not fail to do it, and the doctors bade him drink buttermilk, still assuring him that there was no danger, and that it was merely headache, and the vapour of the waters. However, whatever they said, he had no belief in them, and begged me to get a clergyman to pass the night with him; and I thought him so ill, that, without saying anything about it, I directed candles and all necessary to be brought, so that he could take the communion the next day.

The preparations were not useless, and were required sooner than we had expected, for, towards midnight, he had so violent an attack of convulsions that, when it had passed, we thought he was dead, and we all were greatly distressed to see him die without the holy sacrament, after having so often and instantly demanded it. But God, who was willing to reward a desire so earnest and so right, mira-

culously suspended this convulsion, and restored to him his reason as fully as when he was in perfect health, so that the curé, entering his room with the holy sacrament, cried aloud: Here is that which you have so much desired. These words completely roused him, and as the curé drew near to give him the communion, he made an effort and half rose, so as to receive it with respect; and when the curé having questioned him, as is customary, on the chief mysteries of the faith, he replied distinctly: Yes, I believe all this with all my heart. Then he received the holy viaticum and the extreme unction with the utmost tenderness and with tears. He made all the responses. He thanked the curé, and, when the curé blessed him, using the holy vessel, he said: May God never leave me. Which were almost his last words, for a moment after returning thanks the convulsions took him again, and never left him, nor after gave him a moment's freedom of mind. They lasted until his death, twenty-four hours later, on the 19th of August 1662, at one o'clock in the morning, he being aged thirty-nine years and two months.

PASCAL'S PROFESSION OF FAITH,

Found after his death, written in double on parchment and paper, sewn up in his doublet, and marking, apparently, the definite moments of the final conversion.

The year of grace 1654,

Monday, November 23, day of Saint Clement, Pope and martyr, and of other martyrs.

Eve of Saint Chrysogonus, martyr, and others.

From about half past ten at night up to about half past twelve:

Fire.

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob.[1]

Not of the philosophers and men of science.

Certainty. Certainty. Feeling. Joy. Peace.

God of Jesus Christ.

Deum meum et Deum vestrum.[2]

"Thy God shall be my God."[3]

Forgetfulness of the world and of all but God.

[1] Exod. iii. 6; Matt. xxii. 32.

[2] John xx. 17.

[3] Ruth i. 16.

He can be found only by the ways taught in the Gospel.

Greatness of the human soul.

"O righteous Father, the world hath not known[1] thee, but I have known thee."

Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy.

I have separated myself from him.

Dereliquerunt me fontem aquæ vivæ.[2]

Wilt thou leave me, O my God?[3]

May I not be for ever separated from him.

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."[4]

Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ.

I have separated myself from him; I have fled him, renounced him, crucified him.

O may I never be separated from him.

I can only keep him by the ways taught in the Gospel.

Renunciation total and sweet.

Total submission to Jesus Christ and to my Director.

For ever in joy in return for one day's toil on earth.

Non obliviscar sermones tuos. Amen.[5]

[1] John xvii. 25. [2] Jerem. ii. 13. [3] Matt. xxvii. 46.
[4] John xviii. 3. [5] Ps. cxix. 16.

THOUGHTS OF PASCAL

BOOK I

CHAPTER I [1]

Against the indifference of Atheists.[2]

I

LET them at least learn what is the religion that they assail, before they assail it. If this religion boasted of having a clear view of God, of possessing a God uncovered and unveiled, to say that we see nothing in the world which shows us this view with such clearness would be to assail this view. But since, on the contrary, religion says that men are in darkness and estranged from God, that He has hidden Himself from their perception, that He has even

[1] Together with M. Louandre, and others, I have placed the following glorious fragment as an Introduction to the *Pensées*. It is not found in what remains of Pascal's manuscript, only in the contemporary copies. It forms the first chapter of the Port Royal edition, and is, no doubt genuine.

[2] This is the title of the chapter in the Port Royal edition.

given Himself this name in the Scriptures, Deus absconditus;[1] and, in fine, if religion labours with equal care to establish these two things: — That God has established in His Church notes by which those who sincerely seek Him can discover Him, and that, nevertheless, He has covered these signs in such a way that He shall not be perceived save by those who seek Him with all their heart; what advantage, I ask, is it to them in the neglect of the search for truth which they so clearly show forth, that they exclaim that nothing shows the truth to them? For this darkness in which they find themselves, and for which they blame the Church, does but establish one of the things which the Church teaches, without affecting the other, and far from destroying, establishes its doctrine.

To assail the truth they must proclaim that they have sought everywhere with all their might to find it, and that, too, along the paths which the Church points out for their guidance, and yet that they have failed. If they were to say that they had done this, they would in truth assail one of her claims. But I hope I shall show here that no reasonable person can so speak, and I even venture to say that no one ever has done so. We know well enough how people of this kind act. They think they have taken great pains to instruct themselves, when they have employed some hours in reading some books of Scripture, and have questioned some

[1] Isaiah xlv. 15.

Churchman about the truths of religion. After that they boast of having sought amongst books and men without success.[1]

But, indeed, I cannot avoid saying to them what I have often said, that this negligence is insupportable. It is not a question of some slight interest, affecting a stranger. It is myself, my whole existence, which is at stake.

The immortality of the soul is so important to us, so deeply concerns us, that one must be dead to feeling not to care to know about it. All our actions and our thoughts must take such different directions, according as there are or are not everlasting blessings, that no step can be taken with sense and judgment, without regulating it in accordance with this point of view, our ultimate aim and object.

Thus then our first interest and our first duty is to enlighten ourselves on this subject on which our conduct depends. And that is why, in the case of those not yet persuaded, I make a marked distinction between those who labour with all their might to get instruction and those who live without taking pains about it and thinking about it.

I cannot but compassionate those who groan beneath the burden of their doubt, who regard

[1] Pascal perhaps insufficiently appreciates the difficulty of those who find religion incompatible with life—with war, for instance, with private interests, and so forth. The objections of these persons are not theological. His reply might be that still they must search hard for the truth, and, when found, must embrace it, irrespective of apparently contrary truths.

it as the worst misfortune, who spare no pains to escape from it, and make this research their principal and most serious occupation.

But for those who pass their life without thinking of the final end of life, and who for this reason only that they do not find in themselves the light of conviction,[1] neglect to seek it elsewhere, and to examine thoroughly if this belief is amongst those which are accepted by the people through simplicity and credulity, or amongst those which, although obscure in themselves, have nevertheless a solid and indestructible foundation—I look at such persons in a very different light.

This negligence about a matter which concerns themselves, their eternal life, their all, excites my anger rather than my pity. The thing is astonishing, monstrous. It frightens me. And this is not the sentiment of pious zeal and spiritual devotion. On the contrary, I hold that one should have this feeling owing to the interests of humanity and of self-respect; we need no more than these interests to see what the least enlightened sense.

One does not need a very high class of mind to see that here there is nothing truly firm and satisfying, that all our pleasures are but vanity, that our ills are infinite, lastly, that death which threatens us every instant must infallibly in a few years place us in the dreadful necessity of being either eternally annihilated or eternally unhappy. There is nothing more real than this,

[1] Mr Kegan Paul's translation.

nothing more dreadful. Make as brave a show as we will, that is the end of the most glorious life. Let us reflect on this, and say then whether it is doubtful that there is no good in life, save the hope of another life, that one is only happy in proportion as one approaches this hope, and that as there are no longer any misfortunes for those who have an entire assurance in respect to eternity, so there is no good fortune for him who has not some ray of light upon it.

It is then assuredly a great evil to be in doubt about this, but it is at least an indispensable duty to inquire when one is in this doubt; thus then he who doubts and does not inquire is at once a very unhappy and a very unjust person. But if he is calm and satisfied, if he boasts himself and makes light of his doubts, if he enjoys and is proud of this his condition, I have no words in which to describe a creature so extravagant.

Whither can such feelings lead him? What joy is there in expecting only misery without relief? What cause for pride in perceiving oneself covered with impenetrable darkness? How can a reasonable man reason as follows?

"I know not who has put me in the world, nor what the world is, nor what I am myself. I am terribly ignorant on all these matters. I know not what my body is, nor my senses, nor my soul, and that part of me even which thinks the thoughts that I give utterance to, which reflects upon all things and upon itself, yet knows not itself any better than it knows other

things. I see these dread world-spaces which shut me in. I see myself attached to a corner of this vast extent of space without knowing why I am placed here rather than elsewhere, nor why my short space of life is given me just now rather than at any other time during all eternity which has preceded and is to follow me. On every side I see infinity, which closes in the atom me, the shadow of an instant which has no return. The only thing I do know is that I must soon die; and yet I quite ignore this very death, the alone inevitable thing."

"I don't know whence I came, and I don't know whither I am going. I only know that in quitting this world I am for ever annihilated, or for ever fall into the power of an angry God. This is my state, full of misery, of feebleness, of darkness. And from all this I come to the conclusion that I should pass all the days of my life without thought of searching after what is going to happen to me. Perhaps I could find some light for my doubts, but I won't take the trouble, won't move a step to look for it, and after treating with contempt those who take heed of this care, I am ready to go and make trial of an event so great without foresight and without fear, to allow myself to go easily on towards death, uncertain about my everlasting future."

Who would wish to have for friend a man who should talk in this way? Who would choose him to discuss business with? Who would have recourse to him in affliction? In fine, what on earth would be the use of him?

It is in truth a glory to religion to have for enemies men so unreasonable, and their opposition is so little dangerous to her, that on the contrary it assists in establishing her principal truths. For the Christian religion aims chiefly at establishing two things only—the corruption of nature, and redemption by Jesus Christ. Thus, if these people are not witnesses to the truth of the redemption by the sanctity of their lives, they at least serve in an admirable way to show the corruption of nature by sentiments so unnatural.

Nothing is so important to man as his state; nothing is so formidable to him as eternity. And thus if one finds men indifferent to the loss of their existence, and to the danger of an eternity of misery, it is unnatural. They are quite different about all other things: they fear the slightest events, they foresee them, they perceive them, and the man who spends so many days and nights in rage and despair in consequence of the loss of a post, or of some imaginary offence against his honour, is the very one who knows that he will lose all by death, yet is unconcerned and unmoved. To see in the same heart and at the same time this sensibility in regard to the smallest things and this strange insensibility in regard to the greatest things is a monstrosity. It is an incomprehensible enchantment, a supernatural supineness, which points to an all-powerful cause.

There must surely be a strange reversal in the nature of man to make him glory in this state,

in which it seems incredible that a single person could be. However, I have seen so large a number of such persons that the fact would be surprising, did we not know that most of those so implicated are pretenders, and are not such as they seem to be.[1] These are the people who have heard tell that the manners of good society consist in such daring. They try to imitate this—shaking off the yoke, as they call it. But it would not be difficult to make them understand how mistaken they are in seeking esteem in this way. This is not the way to acquire it even among men of the world who judge things sanely, and who know that the only way to succeed is to show oneself honest, faithful, judicious and capable of useful service to a friend, since it is the nature of men to love him who can be useful to them. Now how does it advantage us to hear a man say that he has shaken off the yoke, that he does not believe that there is a God who watches over his actions, that he considers himself the sole master of his actions, and the sole person to whom to render his account. Does he think to induce us by this to have confidence in him henceforth, to expect his consolation, his counsel, his succour in all the needs of life? Do they propose to make our hearts glad by telling us in proud and

[1] Atheism being unnatural and monstrous . . . the vain conception of men who wish to appear uncommon and reformers of the world . . . poor brain-sick wretches, who try to be worse than they can be.—(Montaigne.)

confident tones that our soul is but smoke, but a breath of wind? Is a man to say such a thing as this with gaiety? Shall he not rather say it sadly, as being the saddest thing in the world to say?

If they thought seriously they would see that this is so mistaken, so contrary to good sense, so far removed in every respect from that good taste which they aim at, that they would be more ready to reform than to corrupt those who might have some inclination to follow them. And, in fact, should you make them render an account of their feelings, and of their reasons for doubting religion, they will say things so feeble and so low that they will persuade you of the contrary. It was much to the purpose that someone said one day to some of them: "If you go on talking in this way you will in truth convert me." And he was right. For who would not be horrified to find his opinions those of persons so contemptible.

The unfortunate proposers of these sham arguments do violence to their nature by their absurdity. If they are grieved in their heart of hearts because they lack the light, let them not dissimulate. There is no shame, but entire loss of shame. 'Tis a mark of the feeblest wit not to recognise the misfortune of the man who lives without God. Nothing shows a worse disposition than not to desire earnestly the truth of the eternal promises; nothing is more cowardly than to brave it out against God. Let them leave these impieties to those so ill-

bred as to be really and truly capable of them. Let a man be at least honourable if he cannot be a Christian. Let him recognise that there are but two kinds of people who can be called reasonable—those who serve God with all their heart because they know Him, and those who seek Him with all their heart because they know Him not.

But as for those who live without knowing Him, and without seeking after Him, they judge themselves so little worthy of their own care that they are unworthy of the care of others; and one must have all that Christian charity which they despise, not to despise them even to the abandonment of them in their folly. But since this our religion compels us always to look upon them, so long as they shall live, as capable of obtaining grace which may enlighten them, and since it bids us believe that in a little they may be more fulfilled with faith than we are ourselves, and that we on the other hand may fall into that blindness in which they are at present, we must do for them what we would wish that they should do for us if we were in their place, and we must summon them to have pity on themselves, and at least to take some steps to try if they may not find the light. I ask them to devote to the reading of this book some of those hours that they employ so uselessly on other things; whatever their aversion to the task, perchance they will find something, anyhow they won't lose much. But as for those who bring to the task perfect sincerity

and a real desire to find the truth, I hope that they will here find satisfaction, and that they will be convinced by the proofs of a so divine religion which I have here collected, and which I present in some such order as this :—

II

Let us consider then, hereanent, of those who live without thinking of this last end of life, who, permitting themselves to follow their inclinations and their pleasures without reflection and without anxiety, and as though they could annihilate eternity by turning away their thoughts from it, think only of the happiness of the moment.

Yet this eternity exists, and death, which will open it, and which threatens them every hour, will soon and infallibly place them in the dreadful certainty of being eternally annihilated or eternally unhappy, without their knowing which of these eternities is prepared for them.

Their tranquillity in this state of ignorance is a shocking thing, and one which forces us to try and make them feel the madness and idiocy of thus passing their lives, by showing forth their life to them, so as to confound them by the sight of their folly. For this is how men reason, when they choose to live in this ignorance of what they are, and without seeking for the light. I do not know, they say . . .[1]

[1] I have thought it well to preserve this uncompleted *pensée*, a specimen of many more.

III

Between us and hell or heaven there is nothing but the life that is between the two, which is the frailest thing in the world.

IV

A man in a dungeon, not knowing whether his sentence is decided, and having but an hour to learn, and that hour being sufficient if he knows the decision to get it revoked, it is contrary to nature that he should employ this hour, not in ascertaining if the sentence is decided, but in playing piquet.[1] Thus it is unnatural that man, etc. It is a dulness inflicted by the hand of God.[2]

V

We run heedlessly towards the precipice, after having placed something before us to prevent us from seeing it.

VI

Thus not only the zeal of those who seek Him proves God, but the blindness of those who seek Him not.

[1] Port Royal substitutes for "mais à jouer au piquet," "mais à jouer et à se divertir;" but Pascal, like his Master, gives graphic everyday illustrations.

[2] A suggestion of the doctrine of reprobation. Rom. xi. 8.

Chapter II

Man's lofty and low estate. The astonishing contradictions in his nature.

1

LET man then contemplate the whole realm of nature in the height and fulness of its majesty; let him move far from his sight the base objects which surround him; let him regard that dazzling light set like an everlasting lamp to lighten the universe; let him consider the earth as a point compared with the vast circle which this sun describes; and let him consider with amazement that this vast circle itself is but a very small point compared with the rolling circle of the stars. But if our view stops at this point, imagination passes beyond, and it will sooner cease to imagine than nature to offer subject for imagination. All this visible world is but an imperceptible atom in the ample bosom of nature. We can get no idea of it. Our task is to swell our conceptions beyond conceivable space, but in comparison with the reality we conceive merely atoms. The circle is infinite, with centre everywhere and circumference nowhere.[1] In short, the most sensible

[1] In a lengthy and learned note, M. Havet traces the history of this famous comparison through Montaigne and Rabelais to the ancient authors. Pascal was steeped in Montaigne, and may have taken it from him; but students will recognise that the same

mark of God's all-power is this, that our imagination loses itself in such thought.

Let man then, returning to himself, consider what he is in comparison with what is; let him view himself as though wandering in this remote region of nature, and let him from this universe, this dark little hole[1] where he lodges, learn to estimate the earth, the kingdoms, the towns, himself, at their due value.

What indeed is a man in the infinite? But to offer him another prodigy as astonishing, let him examine the slightest things he knows. A mite in its tiny body has parts incomparably smaller, yet limbs with joints, veins in those limbs, blood in those veins, humours in the blood, drops in these humours, air in these drops; let him divide these last things, he will exhaust himself in his conceptions, and let the last thing he can think of be the subject of our discourse. He will imagine perhaps that now he has reached the tiniest thing in nature. Aye, but he shall see within it a new abyss. I will show him this minute atom pregnant not only with the visible universe, but with the whole conceivable immensity of nature. Let him see there an infinity of universes, each with its firmament, its planets, its earth, in the same proportion as the visible world, on this earth

thought, expressed in almost or quite the same words, is often original to many thinkers at many times. "There is no new thing under the sun."

[1] Montaigne, *Apol.* t. iii. p. 169, "Tu ne vois que l'ordre et la police de ce petit caveau où tu es logé."

animals, aye and mites, in which he will find again the seed of the former mites—and still without end or rest, finding the same thing in the other things, let him lose himself in these marvels as astonishing in their littleness as the others in their extent, for who would not marvel that our body, which but a moment ago was imperceptible in the universe, imperceptible in the bosom of the whole, should now be a colossus, a world, or rather a whole in respect to the nothingness which we cannot reach.

He who looks at himself in this way will be terrified by himself, and, thinking of his material being so to say held midway between these two abysses of the infinite and the nought, he will tremble at the spectacle of these marvels; and I think that, his inquisitiveness changing into admiration, he will be more disposed to contemplate these extremes in silence than to inquire into them with presumption.

For what in fine is man in Nature? Nothing in regard to the infinite. A whole in regard to the nothing. A middle between nothing and everything. At an infinite distance from understanding the extremes, the end of things and their beginning are invincibly hidden from him in a secrecy which is impenetrable, alike incapable, as he is, of seeing the nothing from which he is drawn, and the infinite in which he is swallowed up.

What shall he do then if not get some sight of this middle of things in endless despair of

obtaining knowledge of their commencement or their end? Everything is sprung from nothing, and borne on towards the infinite. Who will follow this wondrous procession? The author of these marvels understands them, none other can do so.

Through lack of considering these infinities, men have been rashly hurried to the investigation of nature, as if they bore some proportion to her.

It is a strange thing then that their wish has been to understand the principles of things, and thence to arrive at a knowledge of all, with presumption as infinite as their object matter. For there is no doubt that we cannot form this design without a presumption or a capacity as infinite as nature.

The well-instructed man understands that nature, having graven her likeness and that of her Maker on everything, almost everything partakes of her double infinity. This is why we see that all the sciences are infinite in the extent of their researches; for who doubts that geometry, for example, has an infinite number of propositions to propose? They are infinite in the number and nicety of their principles, for who does not perceive that those which are postulated as final are not self-supporting, and that they rest on others, which again rest on others, and never let us reach the final?

But we consider first principles those which appear to our reason to be so, just as in material things, where we call an indivisible

point that beyond which our perception cannot go, though the point is still by nature infinitely divisible.

Of these two infinities of science, that of size is much more easily perceived, and that is why few people have pretended to a knowledge of all things: I am going to speak of all things, said Democritus.

But the infinitely little is much less easy to perceive. Philosophers have far oftener asserted that they have reached it, and have all failed. This is what has given occasion for such titles as *The origin of things*, *The principles of philosophy*, and suchlike, as presumptuous in fact, though less so in appearance, as that other title which dazzles our eyes, *De omni scibili*.

We naturally imagine that we are more capable of arriving at the centre of things than of embracing their circumference. The perceptible extent of the world is perceptibly beyond us; but as we ourselves are bigger than the little things, we think ourselves more capable of understanding them, yet it needs not less capacity to reach the nothing than the all. To do either one or the other we must have an infinite capacity, and it seems to me that whoever should understand first principles could get to know the infinite also. The one depends on the other, and leads to the other. Their limits touch and unite by dint of being moved apart, and meet again in God, and in God only.

Let us know our limit. We are something, and we are not all. What existence we have

hides from us the knowledge of first principles, which spring from the nothing, and the littleness of our being hides from us the sight of the infinite.[1]

Our intelligence holds in the order of things intelligible, the same rank as our body occupies in the order of things natural.

Limited in every part this state which holds the middle between two extremes discovers itself in all our powerlessnesses.

Our senses can perceive no extreme. Too much noise deafens us; too much light blinds us; too great distance, too close proximity, etc., prevents us from seeing; too much truth amazes us. I know men who cannot understand that if four is taken from nought, nought remains.[2]

First principles are too obvious for us. Too much pleasure inconveniences us. Too many harmonies displease in music. Too many benefits annoy us; we want to have the wherewithal to pay the debt. *Beneficia eo usque læta sunt dum videntur exsolvi posse; ubi multum antevenere, pro gratia odium redditur.*[3]

We do not feel extreme heat, nor yet extreme cold. Excess is contrary to us, and not perceptible. We do not feel it, we simply undergo it.

[1] There is a notion of comparative size. We are too big to see the infinitely small, the nothing; too small to see the infinitely large.

[2] This remark has been objected to on various grounds. Pascal seems only to mean that if "nothing" is diminished it is still "nothing."

[3] Tacitus—Ann. iv. 18, quoted by Montaigne.

Being too young and being too old prevent intelligence, as do too much and too little teaching. In a word extremes are for us as though they did not exist, and in regard to them we have no existence. They escape us, or we them.

This then is our true condition, and it is this which makes us incapable of certain knowledge or of absolute ignorance. We sail on a vast mid-sea, floating in constant uncertainty, thrust from one extremity to the other. If we think to bind and attach ourselves firmly to some goal, it gives ground and avoids us; and if we follow, it escapes our hands, and glides away in eternal flight. Nothing stops on our account. Such is the condition natural to us, yet the most contrary to our inclinations. We burn with the desire to find a firm seat, a fixed and final base on which to raise a tower which shall reach the infinite; but our foundation breaks to atoms, and the earth opens to the abyss.

Let us then no longer seek assurance and stability. Our reason is always being deceived by the inconstancy of appearances. Nothing can fix the finite between the two infinities which shut it in and escape it.

With this premise I think we shall keep quiet, each in the condition in which nature has placed him. This mean which has happened to us as our lot being always distant from the extremes, what signifies it that man should understand things a little better? If he has this understanding he starts a little higher up,

yet is he not always at an infinite distance from the end, and if we live ten years longer yet is not the duration of our life infinitely removed from eternity?

In sight of these infinities all finites are equal, and I don't see why we should settle our thought rather on one finite than on another. To compare ourselves with the finite is troublesome enough.[1]

If man made himself his first study, he would see how incapable he is of passing to the beyond. How can a part know the whole? But he will perhaps aspire to know at least the parts with which he has relation. But the parts of the world have all such relation with and dependence on one another that I hold it impossible to know the one without knowing the other and the whole.

For example, man has relation with all he knows. He has need of space to contain him, of time in order to last, of movement in order to live, of elements of which to be composed, of heat and food to nourish him, of air to breathe. He sees the light, he perceives substances. In fact he is connected with everything.

In order, then, to know man, one must learn from whence it comes that he has need of air to

[1] The above seems a fairly adequate rendering of a few difficult words. Miss Rawlings, usually excellent in translation, says, "The mere comparison between ourselves and the infinite vexes us"; but Pascal appears to have written "fini"—not "infini."

exist; and in order to understand the air, one must learn in what consists its relation to the life of man, etc.[1]

Flame cannot exist without air, therefore to know the one you must know the other.

All things, then, being products and things which produce, substances which go to the making of other substances, and substances to the making of which other substances go, things mediate and things immediate, and all interlinking with one another by a natural and imperceptible link which unites things the most distant and the most different, I hold it impossible to know the parts without knowing the whole, and as impossible to know the whole without knowing the separate parts.

And that which brings about our powerlessness to know things is that they are simple in themselves, and that we are composed of two opposite natures of different kinds—of soul and body. For it is impossible that the part in us which reasons can be aught but spiritual; and when people assert that we are simply corporal, that would still more exclude us from the knowledge of things, there being nothing so inconceivable as to say that matter can recognise itself. It is not possible for us to perceive how it could know itself.

And thus, if we are simply material, we can't know anything at all, and if we are composed of

[1] The etc. signifies that a similar train of reasoning must be applied to the other things with which man has relation, that is, to everything.

mind and matter we cannot perfectly know simple things, spiritual or corporal.

Hence it arises that almost all philosophies confuse ideas, and speak of things corporal in terms of mind, and of things of the mind in terms of body. For they boldly say that bodies incline downwards, that they aspire to their centre, that they avoid destruction, that they abhor the void, that they have inclinations, sympathies, antipathies, which are all things appertaining only to mind. And speaking of mind, they consider it as in a place, and attribute to it movement from one place to another, which are things appertaining only to bodies.

Instead of accepting the ideas of these things pure and simple as they are, we colour them with our own qualities, and imprint our composite nature on all the simple things which we contemplate.

Who would not suppose, when seeing us compose everything of mind and body, that this compound would be easily comprehensible to us? Yet it is the thing which we understand least of all. Man is to himself the most prodigious thing in nature; for he cannot conceive what body is, and still less what mind is, and least of all how a body can be united with a mind; this is the pinnacle of his difficulties, and yet it is his own being: "*Modus quo corporibus adhærent spiritus comprehendi ab hominibus non potest, et hoc tamen homo est.*" [1]

[1] Augustine—De Civ. Dei, xxi. 10, quoted by Montaigne.

II

Too much and too little wine. Give a man none, he can't find the truth. Give him too much, the same.

III

I can easily conceive of a man without hands, feet or head, for it is only experience which teaches us that the head is more necessary than the feet. But I cannot conceive of man without thought, that would be a stone or a brute.[1]

IV

The greatness of man is great in that he knows himself miserable. A tree does not know itself to be miserable. To know oneself to be miserable is then to be miserable; but to know that one is miserable is to be great. These very miseries prove man's greatness. They are the miseries of the *grand seigneur*, the miseries of a dethroned king.

V

We have so high a notion of the mind of man that we cannot endure to be despised by it, and not to be esteemed by some one. The whole happiness of man consists in this esteem.

[1] Cogito, ergo sum.

VI

The search after glory is the greatest baseness of man, but, it is this which is the greatest mark of his superiority [1]; for, whatever possession he has on earth, whatever health and essential advantages he has, he is not satisfied unless he has the esteem of men. He values so highly the reason of men that, whatever advantages he has on earth, if he does not stand well in the opinion of men, he is not content. This is the finest position on earth. Nothing can turn him from this desire, the most ineffaceable of the human heart.

And those who despise men most and liken them to the beasts, still wish to be admired and believed, and by this feeling contradict themselves. Their nature stronger than themselves convincing them of the greatness of man more forcibly than reason convinces them of his baseness.

VII

Man is but a reed, the weakest thing in the world, yet a reed that thinks. It needs not that the world should arm to crush him. A breath of wind, a drop of water, is enough to kill him. But should the universe destroy him, man would still be nobler than his destroyer, for he knows that he is in the act of dying and the advantage

[1] Lycidas, 70, 71:—

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise—
That last infirmity of noble minds.

that the universe has over him. The universe knows nothing about it.[1]

Thus all our dignity consists in thought. By this we must raise ourselves, not by occupying space and time, neither of which we can fill. Let us then endeavour to think well. This is the beginning of morals.[2]

VII (2)

It is not from space that I should seek my dignity, but from the regulation of thought. I should gain nothing by possessing worlds. In relation to space the universe embraces me, and absorbs me as though I were a point; in relation to thought, I embrace it.

VIII

It is dangerous to show man too clearly how like he is to the beasts without showing him his greatness also, and it is dangerous also to show man too clearly his greatness without his lowness.

It is still more dangerous to leave him in ignorance of both. But it is very advantageous to show him both.

VIII (2)

Man must not believe that he is the equal of beasts, nor of angels, nor must he know nought of one or other, he should know both.

[1] I have, for reasons too long to explain, here followed M. Havet's punctuation, though it is different from that of most editors.

[2] Luke vi. 45; 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

IX

CONTRARIES. AFTER HAVING SHOWN THE BASENESS AND THE GREATNESS OF MAN

Man should duly estimate his worth. Let him love himself, because there is in him a nature capable of good, but let him not on this account love the basenesses that are in him. Let him despise himself, because his capacity for good is unused, but he need not on that account despise the capacity. He must both hate and love himself. He has in him the power of knowing the truth and of being happy; but he possesses no constant or satisfying truth.

My desire would be to lead man to wish to find the truth, to be ready, uninfluenced by passion, to follow it whither he shall find it, knowing how greatly his knowledge is obscured by his passions. My desire would be that he should hate in himself the lusts which control him, so that they should not blind him in his choice, nor stop him when he has chosen.

X

I blame equally those who take on themselves to praise man, and those who take on themselves to blame him, and those who merely amuse themselves, and I can only approve of those who seek with tears.

x (2)

The stoics say: Retire into yourselves, there you will find rest; but it is not true. Others say: Go out of yourselves, seek happiness in diversion; and that is not true either. Sickness comes. Happiness is neither out of us nor in us. It is in God, both without us and within us.

Chapter III

Vanity and Self-love.

1

VANITY is so firmly anchored in man's heart that a soldier, a labourer, a cook, a porter, boasts and wants admirers; aye, and the philosophers want them too. And those who write against vanity wish to have the renown of having written well,[1] and those who read them wish for the honour of having read them well, and I who write this have perhaps such desire, and perhaps those who shall read me will have the like.

[1] Montaigne. "Car, comme dict Cicero (pro Archia, ii.), ceulx mesmes qui la combattent, encores veulent-ils que les livres qu'ils en escrivent portent au front leur nom."

II

The nature of self-love and of the human *Me* is to love and consider itself only. But what shall it do? It cannot prevent this thing which it loves being full of faults and miseries. It wants to be big, and sees itself small. It wants to be happy, and sees itself wretched. It wants to be perfect, and sees itself full of imperfection. It wants to be the object of the love and esteem of men, and it sees that its faults deserve only their contempt and aversion. This embarrassed condition produces in it the most unjust and most criminal passion that can be imagined, for it conceives a mortal hatred against this truth which rebukes it and convinces it of its faults. It would like to annihilate the truth, and that destruction being impossible, would destroy the knowledge of it in itself and others—that is to say, it takes all pains to hide its faults from others and itself, and cannot endure that others should point them out, nor see them.

Without doubt it is an evil to be full of faults, but it is a still greater evil to be full of them and unwilling to recognise them, for that is to add the fault of voluntary illusion. We don't want others to deceive us. We think it unfair that they should wish us to estimate them more highly than they deserve. Then it is not fair that we should deceive them, and that we should wish them to estimate us more highly than we deserve.

Thus when they merely disclose our actual imperfections and vices, it is clear that they do us no injury, since they are not the cause of them—that they do us a good, in fact, since they help us to free ourselves from an evil, namely, the ignorance of these imperfections. We ought not to be vexed that they know them, and that they despise us, it being just that they should both know us for what we are, and despise us if we are despicable.

These are the feelings which would be born in a heart which was full of equity and justice. What then ought we to say of ours, when we see there a disposition so contrary? For is it not true that we hate the truth and those who tell it us, and that we delight in flattery, and love to be considered other than we are?

Here is a proof of my statement which horrifies me. The Catholic religion does not oblige us to discover our sins to everybody indiscriminately. It permits that this should remain hidden from all with the exception of one man, to whom it bids us lay bare the bottom of our heart, and show ourselves what we are. There is but this one man in the world whom the Church bids us enlighten, and it ordains for him inviolable secrecy, which results in this knowledge being in him as though it were not. Can one imagine anything more charitable or kindly? And yet the corruption of man is such that it finds hardship even in this law, and it is one of the principal reasons which has made a great part of Europe revolt against the Church.

How unjust, then, and unreasonable is man's heart to think ill of being obliged to do, in respect to one man, what it would be right, in a way, that we should do in respect to all men! For is it right to deceive? There are different degrees in this aversion from truth, but we may say that all of us have it in some degree, for it is inseparable from self-love. It is this false delicacy which obliges those who are compelled to reprove others to choose so many tricks and turns to avoid shocking them. They must minimise our faults, seem to excuse them, mingle praises and esteem and affection with their blame. And when all is said, their medicine is a bitter draught to our self-love. We take as little of it as we can and always with disgust, and often even with a secret spite against those who hand us the cup.

Hence it comes that if one has some reason for desiring our love he declines to render us a service which he knows to be disagreeable to us. We are treated as we wish to be treated. We hate the truth—it is concealed from us. We would be flattered—men flatter us. We love to be deceived—they deceive us.

This is the reason why each step of good fortune removes the truth further from us, for men increasingly fear to wound those whose affection is increasingly useful, and whose resentment is increasingly dangerous. A prince shall be the talk of Europe, and he alone will know nothing of it. I am not surprised at it. To speak the truth is useful to him to whom it

is spoken, but hurtful to those who speak it, because they get themselves disliked. Those who live with princes prefer their own interests to the interests of the prince whom they serve, and thus they do not care to do him a good turn which will be injurious to themselves.

Doubtless this misfortune is greater and more common in the case of those most highly placed; but those in the lowest positions are not exempt from it, for there is always something to be gained by getting men's affection. Thus the life of man is nothing but a continuous illusion; we do nought but deceive and flatter one another. No one speaks of us in our presence as he speaks of us in our absence. The union of men is founded on this mutual deceit, and few friendships would subsist if each person knew what his friend said of him in his absence, although he speaks of him then with sincerity and impassionately.

So then man is but a disguise, a lie and hypocrisy, both in himself and in regard to others. He will not have the truth told him, he avoids telling it to others, and all this disposition, so far removed from justice and reason, is rooted by nature in his heart.[1]

[1] Pascal seems almost to admit the need for flattery, or, at least, concealment. Sad experience teaches that life is impracticable without it. However gross the flattery of the powerful, it is seldom perceived, more seldom rejected.

Chapter IV

The Effects of Imagination, etc.

I

IMAGINATION

IMAGINATION cannot make fools wise, but it makes them happy, at the expense of reason which can only make her friends wretched, imagination wrapping her devotees in glory, reason in shame.[1]

We cannot see a barrister in his robes, with cap on head, without an enhanced opinion of his ability.

Imagination assigns all things. She makes beauty, justice, happiness, which is all the world has to give. I wish I could see that Italian book, of which I only know the title, but that is worth many books: "Custom, Queen of the World." I agree with that without knowing the book, bar the evil in it, if there is any.

Our own interest is a charming and wondrous blind to the eyes. The justest man must not be judge in his own case. I know some who,

[1] Montaigne, iii. 8, t. iv., p. 444: "L'opiniastreté et la temerité remplissent leurs hostes d'esiouissance et d'asseurance." (P. 434, speaking of Fortune) "n'ayant peu faire les malhabiles sages, elle les fait heureux, à l'envy de la vertu."

to avoid falling into this self-favour, have been, out of contrariness, as unjust as can be.

For relatives to recommend to them a really just cause has been a sure means to lose it.

II

The chancellor is grave and adorned, for his position is unreal. Not so the king. He has force to support him. He is not supported by imagination. The judges, doctors, etc., have only imagination.[1]

III

The most important thing in all our life is the choice of a profession, and chance settles it. Custom makes masons, soldiers, thatchers. We say, So and so's an excellent thatcher; and, speaking of soldiers, They are lunatics. And other people say, There is nothing great but war. All but soldiers are knaves. By

[1] In these and similar passages Pascal's aim is to show the frequent powerlessness of truth and reason, in their war with chance, custom, imagination, the art of persuasion. There is throughout a note of scepticism, cynicism, doubt, sadness, exasperation. Pascal was a very reasonable man, and it took him long to learn that comparatively few persons are guided by reason. Probably he learnt the lesson too late. Possibly he would not, or could not, have recourse to the arts whose power he extols. He sees that the world is ruled by custom, persuasion, flattery, not by reason and truth, and he is exasperated.

dint of hearing these professions praised, whilst children, and others despised, we make our choice, for by nature we love truth, and hate folly.

These words influence us. The fault is in the application. So great is the power of custom, that of those whom nature has made men, we make all sorts of men; for some countries are all masons, others all soldiers, etc. But without a doubt nature is not so uniform. Custom, constraining nature, does this, and sometimes nature prevails, and keeps a man to his instinctive desire, in spite of all custom, good or bad.

IV

If a man examines his thoughts, he will find them all occupied with the past and the future. We hardly think at all about the present; and if we do think of it, it is but to get light from it to dispose of the future. The present is never our end. The past and the present are our means, the future alone is our aim. Thus we never live, but we hope to live;[1] and, always laying ourselves out to be happy (in the future), it is inevitable that we can never be so actually.[2]

[1] "You can't be happy to-day, because you weren't happy yesterday, and think you won't be happy to-morrow."

[2] Montaigne, i. 3, t. i., p. 19. "Nous ne sommes jamais chez nous, nous sommes tousiours au delà," etc.

V

By constantly reflecting on this life our imagination makes it so big, and by failing to reflect on eternity, makes that so small, that eternity becomes a cipher to us, and a cipher an eternity, and the roots of this our conduct are so vigorous in us, that all our reason cannot prevent it, and that . . .[1]

VI

Cromwell would have devastated Christianity. The royal family would have been ruined, and his family for ever in power, but for a little grain of sand in his bladder. Even Rome would have trembled before him, but, this little bit of gravel being there, he dies, his family is abased, all is peace, and the king is restored.[2]

VII

OF JUSTICE, CUSTOMS AND PREJUDICES

On what shall man found the economy of the world which he wants to govern? Shall it be on the caprice of each individual? What a

[1] This—"and that" is a good instance of the incompleteness of the Pensées—the words are left, perhaps, as suggesting some definite train of thought in the thinker's mind. For this they would be enough, since Pascal had the memory of genius. Perhaps they signify some sudden access of his malady.

[2] Charles II. was restored in 1660, two years before the death of Pascal. Cromwell did not die of stone.

confusion! Shall it be on justice? Men ignore it.

For, to be sure, if men were acquainted with justice, they would not have established this maxim, the most general amongst men—that each should follow the customs of his country. The fame of true justice would have brought all peoples into subjection, and legislators would not have taken for their model, instead of this fixed justice, the fancies and caprices of Persians, Germans, Indians. We should see it planted among all the states of the world, and in all times, instead of seeing nothing just or unjust which does not change its quality with the change of climate. Three degrees of latitude reverse jurisprudence. A meridian decides what is truth. Fundamental laws change after we have possessed them a few years. Right has its epochs. The entrance of Saturn into the Lion corresponds with the origin of such and such a crime. A droll notion of justice which is limited by a river! This or that is truth on this side of the Pyrenees, falsehood on the other.

Theft, incest, infanticide, parricide, have all found places amongst virtuous actions. Can anything be more ridiculous than that a man should have the right to kill me because he lives the other side of the water, and because his prince has a quarrel with mine, although I have none with him.

Doubtless there are natural laws; but this fine reason of ours, itself corrupted, has cor-

rupted everything.[1] *Nihil amplius nostrum est; quod nostrum dicimus artis est.*[2] *Ex senatus-consultis et plebiscitis crimina exercentur.*[3] *Ut olim vitiis, sic nunc legibus laboramus.*[4]

From this confusion it results that one says the essence of justice is the authority of the law-giver, another—the convenience of the sovereign, another—the custom of the day, and that is the safest definition.

VIII

What are natural principles? Are they not the outcrop of custom? In the case of children, for instance—the principles which they have received from the habits of their parents, just as animals learn the chase of other animals from one another.

Different customs would give different natural principles. This is a matter of experience, and if some cannot be effaced by habit, so some habits cannot be effaced by natural inclination or by other habits. It is a matter of the disposition.

Fathers fear lest their children's natural disposition should be effaced. What sort of a nature is this, subject to be effaced? Habit is a second nature which destroys the first. But what is nature? Why, isn't habit a matter of

[1] Doubtless a reference to the doctrine of original sin.

[2] These three quotations are from Montaigne; the origin of the first is unknown.

[3] Seneca. Letter 35.

[4] Tacitus. Ann. iii. 25.

nature? I am very much afraid that this nature is but a first habit, just as habit is a second nature.

IX

If we were to dream the same dream every night it would be as important to us as the things we see every day, and if an artisan were sure of dreaming every night for twelve hours that he is king, I think he would be almost as happy as a king who should dream every night for twelve hours that he is an artisan.

If we were to dream every night that we were pursued by enemies and driven by ghosts that troubled us, and that we passed all our days in diverse occupations as when one travels, we should suffer almost as much as if the thing was true, and we should dread to go to sleep, just as one dreads the hour of awakening when one fears to enter on such evils in reality. And, in fact, the result would be almost as bad as if the case was really so. But since dreams all differ from one another, and since any dream is various and disconnected, what we see in dreams affects us much less than what we see when awake, for when awake there is continuity; yet what is so equable and continuous that it does not change like the changes on a journey, though generally less abrupt changes, and then we say: "I seem to be dreaming"—for life is a dream, though with more of continuity in it. [1]

[1] Montaigne says finely (Apol., t. iii., p. 316): "Pourquoi ne mettons-nous en doubte si nostre

X

The world comes to good decisions, for it is in the natural ignorance which is the true wisdom of man. Science has two extremes which meet. The first is the simple, natural ignorance of the child at birth. The other extreme is that at which great souls arrive, who, having gone through all that man can learn, find that they know nothing, and meet themselves again in that same ignorance whence they had set out. But this is a wise ignorance which knows itself. Those who have come out of natural ignorance, but have not arrived at the other kind of ignorance, have some tincture of this satisfying ignorance, and these make the noise.

Such persons trouble the world, and judge ill of all things. The people and the wise compose the bulk of the community. The other class despises it, and is despised. Such persons judge badly about all things, and the world judges well about all things. [1]

XI

Without grace man is full of natural and ineradicable error. • Nothing shows him the

penser, nostre agir, est pas un aultre songer, et nostre veiller quelque espèce de dormir?"

[1] Montaigne (Apol., t. iii., p. 123), speaking of those who, disdaining their first state of ignorance, have not been able to reach this second state, calls them "le cul entre deux selles, desquels jesuis et tant d'aultres, dangereux, ineptes, importuns; ceulx-cy troublent le monde."

truth. Everything imposes on him. These two principles of truth, reason and perception, besides the fact that each is itself lacking in clear truth, impose reciprocally on one another. Perception imposes on reason by false appearances, and this same trickery which it applies to reason it receives from her in turn.[1] Passion troubles our senses, and gives them false impressions. They rival one another in lying and deceit. But besides those errors which come by accident and by lack of intelligence, with those heterogeneous faculties (I must begin here the chapter on the deceptive powers).

Chapter V

Miseries and Distractions.

I

DIVERSION

FROM infancy we impose on man the care of his honour, his goods, his friends, aye, and of the goods and honour of his friends. We overwhelm him with business, with the drudgery of languages and exercises; we give him to understand that he cannot be happy without his

[1] Montaigne (Apol., t. iii., p. 15), has the thought almost word for word: "Cette mesme piperie que les sens apportent a nostre entendement, ils la recoivent à leur tour."

health, his honour, his fortune, and his friends' health, honour and fortune being in good condition, and that the lack of one single thing would make him unfortunate. And so we charge men with business, which pesters them all day long. A strange method, one would say, to make them happy! How could one adopt a better plan to make them miserable! And yet what might we do? We have but to take away all these cares, then they would see themselves, they would think of what they are, whence they come, whither they are going, and for this reason, I suppose, it is impossible to occupy them too much and turn them aside from such thoughts; and, I suppose, too, that is why, after having made so much business for them, if they have any time for relaxation, we advise them to employ it in diversion, in play, and always to keep themselves occupied. (How fantastical is man's heart and full of beastliness!)

II

When I have sometimes set myself to consider the divers distractions of men, the perils and pains to which they are exposed at court, in war, from which spring so many quarrels and passions, such daring and often wicked undertakings, I have discovered that all the evils of mankind come from one only thing, and that is —not knowing how to live quietly at home. A man who has enough to live on, if he knew how to dwell pleasantly at home, wouldn't leave his

home to go upon the sea or to besiege some place or other. A man would not buy a place in the army at so dear a price if he didn't find it insupportable never to budge from his town, and we should not seek conversation and the diversion of play except that we cannot stay at home with pleasure.

But when I have looked more narrowly into the matter, and when, after having found the cause of all our misfortunes, I have wished to discover the reason for it, I have found that there is one very efficient reason, which consists in the natural misfortune of our feeble and mortal condition, a condition so miserable that nothing can console us when we think closely about it.

The king is surrounded by people who think only how to divert the king and to hinder him from thinking of himself. For he is unhappy, king though he is, if he thinks of himself.

Men seek the chase and not the quarry.

They have a secret instinct which urges them to see diversion and occupation outside themselves, which rises from the sense of their continual miseries; and they have another secret instinct, which remains from the greatness of our first nature, which teaches them that happiness is to be found only in repose and not in tumult, and from these two contrary instincts a confused scheme is formed, which is hidden from sight in the bottom of their hearts, which prompts them to aim at rest through agitation, and to imagine always that the satisfaction which they have not got will come to them, if, by sur-

mounting some difficulties which confront them, they can by this means open the gate to rest.

Thus life flows away. We seek rest by combating certain obstacles, and, if these are surmounted, rest becomes unendurable. For, either we think of the miseries we have, or of those we fear. And even when we see ourselves sheltered on all sides, ennui, of its own accord, shall not fail to come from the depths of the heart, where it has natural roots, and to fill the soul with its poison.

Without diversion there is no joy. With it there is no sadness.

III

DIVERSION

Is not the royal dignity enough in itself for him who possesses it to render him happy by the mere sight of what he is? I can quite see that it makes a man happy if you divert him from the sight of his miseries by occupying his thoughts with care for dancing well. But is it the same with a king; and will he be happier by attaching himself to these vain amusements than by considering his greatness? And what object more satisfying can one present to his mind? Is it not then doing injury to his joy to occupy his mind in thinking how to adjust his steps to the cadence of an air, or to strike a note deftly, instead of leaving him to enjoy in repose the contemplation of the glorious

majesty which surrounds him? Try and see. Leave a king quite alone, without any sensual satisfaction, without any mental care, without company, to think of himself at his leisure, and you will see that a king without diversion is a man full of misery. And so they avoid this with care, and there never fails to be beside the king a great number of people who watch to divert him from his affairs, and who take note of all their leisure to provide them with sports and pleasures, so that they may have no vacant time; that is to say, they are surrounded by persons who take uncommonly good care that the king may not be alone and able to think about himself, well knowing that he will be wretched, king though he is, if he thinks of himself.

I do not speak in all this of Christian kings as Christians, but only as kings.

IV

MISERY

Diversion is the one thing which consoles us in our miseries, and yet it is the greatest of our miseries. For it is this chiefly which hinders us from thinking of ourselves, and which insensibly makes us ruin ourselves. Without this we should grow wearied, and this weariness would urge us to seek a more solid means of escape from it. But diversion amuses us, and leads us insensibly to death.

V

DIVERSION

Men being unable to cure death, wretchedness and ignorance, in order to be happy, they have taken counsel with themselves to think of none of these things.

VI

Imagine a number of men in chains and all condemned to death, some of whom are every day butchered in sight of the others; those who remain see their own condition in that of their fellows, and, each painfully and hopelessly beholding the other, await their turn. This is the picture of man's condition.[1]

CHAPTER VI

Advantages of Dress, Birth, etc. Originality unpopular.

I

SCEPTICISM

I SHALL here write my thoughts without order, and yet perhaps in not undesigned confusion. It is the proper order for the subject.

[1] Throughout this article Pascal uses the word "divertissement" in its etymological sense—distraction (from self). Port Royal has made a great many

I should do too much honour to my subject if I treated it in order, since I want to show that it is incapable of order.

II

We do well to distinguish men rather by what is outside than by what is inside themselves. Which of us two shall pass? Which shall yield place to the other? The least clever? But I am as clever as he; we must fight it out. He has four lackeys, I have but one. That is a thing which can be seen; all we have to do is to count. I must give way, and I am a fool if I don't. The result is peace, which is the greatest of blessings.

III

The habit of seeing kings accompanied by guards, drums, officers, and all that tends to respect and awe, brings it about that the face of the king, when seen at times without these accompaniments, impresses respect and awe on his subjects, because thought still associates his person with the usual paraphernalia. And the multitude which knows not that this result

alterations throughout, especially in certain passages referring to kings, wherein probably Pascal had special thought of the late troubles in England. Port Royal cannot venture to publish the thought that a king may be as wearied as the most wretched of his subjects. It is an obvious criticism of the whole chapter that man is an active being, and that it is as natural for him to hunt, etc., as it is for him to think.

comes from custom, believes that it comes from an inherent power, and hence spring these words, "The mark of the Divinity is imprinted on his visage," etc.

IV

Good birth is a great advantage, for it gives a man credit to start with, making him as known and respected at the age of eighteen as another would be on his merits at the age of fifty.[1]

V

Have you never met with people who, to show reasons for their complaint of the small notice which you take of them, speak of the persons of position who esteem them? My answer to such people is this: "Show me the good qualities with which you have charmed those persons, and I will esteem you at the same value as they do."

VI

Those who are capable of originality are rare; most men can but follow, and refuse renown to these discoverers who seek it by their discoveries. And if these persist in desiring to obtain it, and in despising the unoriginal, the other fellows call them names, or perhaps beat them. Don't let us pride ourselves on our cleverness, or let us keep our pride to ourselves.

[1] In these days the remark applies with equal truth to wealth.

Chapter VII

Reason, Custom, Justice, Law, etc.

I

THE commands of reason are much more imperious than those of a master, for disobedience to a master brings misfortune, but disobedience to reason shows a fool.

II

Why kill me? What, my friend! don't you live on the other side of the water? If you lived on this side, I should be a murderer, and it would be unjust to kill you as I am going to; but, since you live on the other side, I'm a fine fellow, and it is just.

III

Custom establishes consent—and justice.

IV

Justice is that which is established; and thus established laws are necessarily considered just without being examined, since they are established.

V

JUSTICE—FORCE

It is just that what is just should be followed: it is necessary that the strongest should be followed. Justice which lacks strength is

powerless. Force without justice is tyrannical. Justice without power is confuted, for there will always be bad people. Force without justice is arraigned. We must then unite justice and force, and, to do so, bring it about that what is just is strong, and that what is strong is just.

Justice is liable to dispute. Force is easily recognised and not disputed. Thus the union of power and justice has proved impracticable, because power has contradicted justice, and has said that it is she herself who is just; and thus not being able to bring it about that the just should be strong, we have made the strong the just.

VI

There are vices which are attached to us only by other vices, and in regard to which, if we remove the parent stem, the branches go too.

VII

DIVERSION

If man was happy, he would be more happy the less he was distracted, as are the saints and God.

True, but is it not a happy condition to be able to enjoy diversion? No, for diversion comes from elsewhere and from outside us, and so it is something dependent and fleeting, subject to be disturbed by a thousand accidents, which result in inevitable afflictions.[1]

[1] See note, p. 97.

VIII

Excess of wit is charged with folly, as is defect of wit. The mid course is the only good course.

IX (1)

Man is full of needs; he loves only those who can satisfy them. He's a good mathematician, you say. But I have no concern with mathematics—the man would take me for a proposition. A good warrior, then? He would treat me like a besieged town. No, I want merely an honest man, who can accommodate himself to my needs all round.[1]

IX (2)

I don't like to hear it said—He is a mathematician—a preacher—eloquent; but—He's an honest man. This universal quality pleases me. It's a bad sign when you think of a man's work as soon as you see him. We should not perceive a quality until there is need for it. *Ne quid nimis*, lest the man be overshadowed by the quality, and named after it. We should not think about such an one that he speaks well, unless it's a question of speaking well—then it should come into our minds.

X

Talk about humility gives material for pride to the boastful, for humility to the humble. Talk about scepticism gives material for assertion to

[1] Montaigne's idea, too, and Tolstoi's. Pascal frequently recurs to the idea.

the assertive. Few speak of humility humbly, of purity chastely, of scepticism doubtingly. We are nothing but lies, duplicity, contrariety, and hide and disguise ourselves from ourselves.

XI

A teller of good stories—a bad man.

XII

Small things console us, for small things afflict us.

XIII

I had spent much time on abstract science, and had been dissatisfied with the little I had in common with it. When I began the study of man, I saw that abstract science is not proper to man, and that I was wandering farther from my condition in investigating it than other people in ignoring it; then I pardoned others for having slight acquaintance with science. But at least I thought to find many companions in the study of man, and that this study is really proper to man. I was deceived. The number of those who study man is even less than the number of those who study geometry. It is but want of knowledge how to study man which leads to other studies. But is it not the case that even this is not man's proper study, and that he had best be ignorant about himself and be happy?

XIV

If we would reprove with advantage, and show another his fault, we must see from what

side he looks at the matter, for usually the thing is true from that point of view, and we must admit this truth, but show him the side on which it is not true. That satisfies him, for he sees that he was not wrong, and that he merely failed to see all sides of the question. Now people are not vexed at failure to see everything. But they don't like to be mistaken, and perhaps this comes from the fact that naturally man cannot see everything, and that by nature he cannot be wrong from his point of view, since what we apprehend with our senses is always true.

XV

Man's virtue must not be judged by great occasions, but by his ordinary life.

XVI

It is not the victory, but the combat, which delights us. We like to see the contest of opinions, but care not at all to contemplate the truth when ascertained.

XVII

We never teach men to be honourable, but we teach them all the rest, and yet they never pique themselves so much on knowing any of the other things as on being honourable. They pique themselves on being the only thing we don't teach them. [1]

[1] In several passages I should like to translate "honnêtes hommes," by "gentlemen," as Havelock said—Jesus Christ was a gentleman; but the word gentleman has associations incompatible with the fact

XVIII

How difficult it is to propose a matter for another's judgment without influencing his judgment by the manner of proposing it! If you say—I think it fine, I think it obscure, or anything like that, you influence his mind to judge accordingly, or you excite him against your view. Better say nothing, and then he judges the matter on its merits, that is to say, in accordance with its merits at that particular time, and in accordance with the other circumstances affecting it, of which you are not the originator. At least you will not have put anything into the thing, unless indeed your silence may have had its effect too, according to the turn and interpretation that his humour may have given it, or according to his conjectures from the look and movements of your face, or from the tone of your voice, in accordance with his powers as a physiognomist: so difficult it is not to dethrone judgment from its natural seat, or rather how little firm and stable is that seat!

XIX

Montaigne is wrong. Custom ought to be followed because it is custom, and not because it is just and reasonable; but the crowd follows it for the sole reason that it thinks custom just;

that Saint Evremond, speaking of the meaning of the phrase "honnête homme" in the seventeenth century, says: "Honnête homme et de bonnes mœurs sont incompatibles." Possibly Old Honesty of the "Pilgrim's Progress" gives something of the idea intended; so, too, the "honest man" of Burns's poem.

if it did not think so, it would not follow custom simply because it was custom—for they won't be subjected except to reason or justice. Without this, custom would be considered tyranny, but the empire of reason and justice is not more tyrannical than that of pleasure. These are the principles natural to man.

It would be proper then to obey laws and customs because they are laws; and to know that there is no question of truth or justice, that we know nothing, and that thus we must simply follow what is received—by this means we should never quit them. But the people is not susceptible of this doctrine; and thus, since the crowd believes that the truth can be discovered, and that it is inherent in laws and customs, it believes them, and takes their antiquity as a proof of their truth, and not merely of their authority without question of truth. Thus it obeys them; but it is liable to revolt against them as soon as it is shown that they are worth nothing, which can be shown of all of them, looking at them on a certain side.

XX

INJUSTICE

It is dangerous to tell the people that the laws are not just; for the people obeys them because it thinks them just. That is why we must tell it at the same time that it must obey them because they are laws, as one must obey one's superiors, not because they are just, but because they are superiors. In this way all sedition is

prevented, if we can get them to listen to this statement, and to the real definition of justice.

XXI

Whoever would know to the full the emptiness of man has but to consider the causes and the effects of love. The cause of love is a *je ne sais quoi* (Corneille), and the effects of it are frightful. This "I know not what"—a thing so small as to be unrecognisable, shakes the earth, princes, armies, the universe. The nose of Cleopatra; if it had been shorter the whole face of the world would have been changed.

XXII

It seems to me that Cæsar was too old to go and amuse himself by conquering the world. This amusement was all right for Augustus or Alexander; they were young and headstrong; but Cæsar ought to have been more mature.

XXIII

LUSTRAVIT LAMPADE TERRAS

The weather and my humour have little connection.[1] I have my joys and my fine weather within me. Even the success and the failure of my business affects me little. I fight sometimes against fortune; the glory of subduing her makes me merry in the contest—provided I may be now and again disgusted with good fortune.

[1] Montaigne's experience is different—"The very air and serenity of the sky brings us some change." Homer, Cicero, Augustine, and everybody else agree with Montaigne.

XXIV

Sometimes my thought escapes me while I write; but this makes me remember my feebleness, which I am constantly forgetting, and teaches me as well as my forgotten thought, for my only aim is to learn my nothingness.[1]

XXV

It is odd, when one thinks of it, that there are people in the world who, having renounced all the laws of God and nature, have themselves made laws which they rigorously obey—such people, for instance, as the soldiers of Mahomet, robbers, heretics, etc.[2]

XXVI

MINE, THINE

This dog is mine, this spot in the sunshine is mine, said these poor children; and here is the beginning and the picture of the usurpation of all the world.

XXVII

That a thing so visible as the emptiness of the world should be so little known, that it should be a thing strange and surprising to say that it is a folly to seek greatness, this is wonderful.

[1] On lit ailleurs, page 142 du cahier autographe, cette phrase barrée. "Pensée échappée. Je la voulais écrire. J'écris, au lieu, qu'elle m'est échappée."—M. HAVET.

[2] To Pascal, a Turk or a heretic is outside law and nature. Compare with the above the gradation in Letter 14 of the Provinciales—"Are these men who speak thus monks and priests? Are they Christians? Are they Turks? Are they men? Are they demons?"

XXVIII

He who does not see the emptiness of the world is himself sufficiently empty-headed. Who then does not see it, except the young who are engaged in the whirl and distraction of life, and in thought of the future! But take away their diversions, you will see them wither away with weariness; then they feel their nothingness without recognising it; for that condition is indeed unfortunate, the sadness of which is insupportable as soon as one is reduced to consider oneself without any distraction.

CHAPTER VIII

Thoughts on Glory, Intelligence, Instinct, Style, etc.

I

THE more wits one has, the more originality one sees. The average man does not see differences between people.

II

There are people who talk well and write indifferently. The reason is that the place and the encouraging presence of others heat them, and draw from their wits more than they would find in them without this encouraging warmth.

III

You must not say that I have said nothing new; the arrangement of the materials is new.

When we play tennis, we both play with the same ball, but one places it better.

IV

Man is neither angel nor brute, and unfortunately he who would make an angel of him turns him out a brute.

V

GLORY

The brutes do not admire one another. A horse does not admire his companion. It is not that there is no rivalry in speed between them, but nothing follows from it; for, as soon as they are in the stable the heavier and worse bred does not give up his corn to the other, as men desire in their own case. Their virtue is its own reward.

VI

Intelligence injured hurts perception. Both intelligence and perception are formed by conversation, and are spoiled by conversation. Thus good or bad talk forms or hurts the mind.[1] It imports that we know well how to choose, so as to form and not to injure, and yet one can't make this choice, unless one has already formed and not injured. Thus there is a circle, and those who escape it are lucky.

VII

When we don't know the truth of a thing, it is well that there should be a common error

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 33.

fixed in men's minds, as, for instance, the moon, to which people attribute the change of the weather, the progress of diseases, etc. For the principal disease of man is the restless quest after things he cannot know, and it is better for him to be in error than in this useless state of curiosity.

VIII

SYSTEM. AGAINST THE OBJECTION THAT SCRIPTURE HAS NO SYSTEM

The heart has its own way; the mind has its own way, which is by statement and proof; but the way of the heart is different. We don't prove that we ought to be loved, by arranging in order the reasons for love; that would be absurd.

Jesus Christ, Saint Paul, proceed by love, not by argument. Their object is to quicken, not to teach. Saint Augustine—the same. This system consists principally in digression on, and constant return to, each point, keeping it always before you.[1]

IX

When in a discourse we find words repeated, and, trying to correct them, we find them so appropriate that alteration would injure the discourse, we must leave them, this is the sign that we must do so; and only blind envy, which knows not that repetition is not a fault in this

[1] Saint Paul's discourse on charity, and the Sermon on the Mount would seem instances in point.

place (would alter them), for there is no general rule.

X

MISCELLANEOUS. LANGUAGE

Those who force words in order to form antitheses are like those who make false windows for symmetry. Their rule is—not fit words but symmetrical sentences.

XI

When natural language depicts a passion, or a thing, we find in ourselves the truth that we are listening to, and which we did not know was in us, so that we are inclined to like him who has made us feel this passion or thing, for he has not shown us his good quality, but ours, and thus this benefit done by him inclines us towards him, besides the fact that our mutual intelligence necessarily inclines our heart to like him.

XII

When we find a natural style, we are astonished and delighted; for we expected to find an author, and we find a man.

XIII

In composition our last choice is what to put first.

XIV

Those who are accustomed to judge by feeling have no comprehension of reasoning; for

they wish to see the thing at first sight, and are not accustomed to search for principles. And the others, on the contrary, who are accustomed to reason by means of principles, have no comprehension of matters of feeling, seeking for their first principles, and not being able to see the thing at a glance.

Chapter IX

Scepticism, Reasoning, Happiness, Intuition.

I

SCEPTICISM

HE who thinks to remain neutral is the sceptic[1] *par excellence*. This neutrality is the essence of the sect. He who is not against them is their strongest advocate; in this is their advantage. They are not for themselves. They are neuter, indifferent, doubtful of all, themselves included.

[1] Pascal uses the word *pyrrhonien*. (The following note is chiefly taken from the History of Philosophy by G. H. Lewes, vol. i., p. 340.) Pyrrho, a serious, reflective man, accompanied Alexander into India, urged by a purely philosophical interest. He was the founder of scepticism, but, like Socrates, he insisted on moral doctrines. He lived and died in happiness, peace and universal esteem. The stronghold of his sceptical teaching was that there is no criterion of truth, that our knowledge is only the knowledge of phenomena.

What shall man do then? Shall he doubt about everything, doubt whether he is awake, whether you are pinching him or burning him, doubt if he doubts, doubt if he is? We can't come to that; and I state it as a fact that there has never been a complete and perfect sceptic. Nature supports our weak reason and prevents it from wandering to this point.

Shall we say, then, on the contrary, that he is in possession of certain truth, he who, however little you press him, can show no title to such knowledge, and is forced to leave go?

What a chimæra, then, is man! How strange and monstrous a thing, a chaos, a contradiction, a prodigy! He, judge of all things, weak worm of earth, depositary of truth, yet slough of uncertainty and error, alike the glory and the offscouring of the world!

Who shall unravel this entanglement? Nature confutes the sceptics, and reason confutes the dogmatists. What, then, will you become, O man, you who seek for your true condition by the light of your natural reason? You can't avoid one of the sects, nor exist in either.

Know, then, proud man, how great a paradox you are to yourself. Humble yourself, weak reason; be silent, weak nature. Learn that man is infinitely incomprehensible to himself, and learn from your master that true condition which you ignore. Hear God.

For, had man never been corrupted, he would in his state of innocence enjoy truth and happiness with assurance. And if man

had never been corrupted, he would have no idea of either truth or happiness. But, unfortunate as we are, and more unfortunate than if there were no greatness in our condition, we have an idea of happiness, but we cannot reach it; we see the face of truth, but only possess her false likeness, incapable of being absolutely ignorant, and of knowing for certain how clear it is that we have been in a state of perfection from which we have unhappily fallen!

How wonderful that the mystery, the most removed from our knowledge, namely the transmission of sin, should be a thing without which we can have no knowledge of ourselves! For, without doubt, nothing shocks our reason more than the statement that the sin of the first man has made blameworthy those who, being so distant from this source, seem incapable of participating in it. This transmission appears not only impossible, it seems to us very unjust; for what is there more contrary to our wretched justice than to damn eternally an infant incapable of will, for a sin in which he appears to have no part, which was committed six thousand years before he existed? Nothing, surely, gives us so rude a shock as this doctrine, and yet without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we are incomprehensible to ourselves. The knot of our existence twists and ravels in this abyss in such a way that man is more incomprehensible without this mystery than this mystery is incomprehensible to man.

II

Without exception, everyone aims at happiness. Whatever different means we employ, all seek this end. What makes one man go to the wars and another stay away is the same desire in both, but with different views regarding it. The will never does the least thing but with this object in view. It is the motive of all the actions of all men, down to those who go and hang themselves.

And yet, after so many years, no one has arrived at this happiness, which all seek so constantly, without faith. All complain—kings, subjects, nobles, commons, old and young, strong and weak, the learned and the ignorant, the sick and the sound, people of all countries, of all times, of all ages, of all conditions.

A line of proof so long, so continuous and so uniform, should surely convince us of our powerlessness to arrive at happiness by our own efforts, but the evidence teaches us little. It never corresponds so perfectly that there is not some slight difference, and from this we expect that our attempt won't be deceived on this occasion as it has been on other occasions. Thus, then, the present never satisfying us, hope dupes us, and, from failure to failure, leads us on to death, the last experiment.[1]

What then is the cry which this eager search and this impotence utter to us, if not that man once possessed true happiness, of which there

[1] I have here followed the manuscript rather than Nicole's correction.

remains to him but the empty sign and trace, and that he tries vainly to fill the void again from all which surrounds him, seeking from things absent the help which he finds not in the present, but which things cannot give it to him, because the infinite gulf cannot be filled but by a thing fixed and infinite, by God himself.

He alone is man's true good, and it is strange that since man has left him, nothing in nature has been able to take his place—not stars, nor heaven, nor earth, the elements, plants, cabbages, leeks, animals, insects, veal, snakes, fever, pestilence, war, famine, vice, adultery, incest. From the time when he lost his true good, all alike can seem his good, aye, even self destruction, a thing contrary to God, to reason and to nature.

III

Not alone the reason but the heart too, tells us the truth. By the heart we learn first principles, and reason, which has nought to do with these, combats them in vain. It is useless for the sceptics to attempt this task. We know that life is not a dream, powerless though we are to prove it by reason. This powerlessness proves only the feebleness of our reason, not the uncertainty of all our knowledge, as they state. For the knowledge of first principles, as that there exist space, time, movement, numbers, is as sure as any knowledge which our reason gives us. Yes, and reason has to lean on this knowledge of the heart and of the instinct, and to found all her arguments on it. The heart

perceives that there are three dimensions in space, and that numbers are infinite, and then reason shows that there are no two square numbers of which the one is double the other. We perceive principles, we argue to conclusions, and both with certainty, although by different ways. And it is as useless and ridiculous that reason should demand from the heart proofs of its first principles, in order to consent to them, as it would be ridiculous for the heart to demand from reason an instinctive perception of all the propositions which she shows, before she would accept them.

This impotence ought then to make reason humble, whose aim it should be to judge of all things, but not to combat our certainty, as if nothing but reason could instruct us. On the contrary, I would to God that we had no need of her, and that we knew things only by instinct and perception! But nature has refused us this good. On the contrary she has only given us very little knowledge of this kind; all the rest can only be acquired by reasoning.

And this is why those to whom God has given religion by heart-perception are very happy and quite legitimately convinced. But as for those who have not this perception, we can only give religion to them by means of reason, until God shall give it them by instinct, without which faith is but human, and useless for safety. [1]

[1] There is another point of view than these two points of view of Pascal, or the one or other point of

CHAPTER X

The existence of God. The wager. Eternity. Faith and how to obtain it.

I

INFINITE. NOTHING

OUR soul is cast into the body, where she finds number, time, dimension. She reasons on these things, and calls them nature, necessity, and can believe naught else.

We know that there is an infinite, and are ignorant of its nature. As we know it is false that numbers are finite, so it is true that there is an infinity in number, but we don't know what it is. It is wrong to say it is even, and wrong to say it is uneven, for if adding one does not change its nature, yet one is a number, and every number is odd or even; at least this is understood of all finite numbers.

Thus we may well know that there is a God without knowing what He is.

So then we know the existence and nature of the finite, because we have similar limits and expansion.

We know the existence of the infinite, and are ignorant of its nature, because it has expansion, as we have, but, unlike us, it has no limits.

But we do not know either the existence or

view of many moralists. The third point of view is well indicated in a remark by the Rev. John Rickaby in *The Month* for July, 1900, page 42: "We must retain the right of the whole concrete moral man to judge in moral concerns."

the nature of God, because He has neither expansion nor limits. [1]

But by faith we know His existence; by glory [2] we shall know His nature.

I have already shown that we can be well assured of the existence of a thing without knowing its nature.

Let us now speak according to the light of nature.

If there is a God, He is infinitely incomprehensible, since, having neither parts nor limits, He has no relation to us; we are then incapable of knowing either what He is or if He is. That being so, who will dare to undertake the solution of the question? Not we, who bear no relation to Him.

Who then will blame Christians for not being able to render a reason for their faith, since they profess a religion for which it is impossible for them to render a reason. They proclaim, when producing it to the world, that it is foolishness, *stultitiam*,[3] and then you complain that they do not prove it. Were they to prove it, they would not keep their word.* It is the absence of proof

[1] Throughout this whole fragment Port Royal made many alterations. Pascal's conclusion is that by faith we know the existence of God, in glory we shall know His nature. Christians cannot be blamed for not being able to render a reason for their belief. It is a matter of faith, not of reason. All this is too narrow and strong for Port Royal.

[2] In Christian parlance La gloire means the state of glory in heaven.

[3] 1 Cor. i. 18.

which shows that they are not lacking in sense. Yes, but whilst this excuses those who offer the excuse, and takes from them the blame of making it without reason, it does not excuse those who accept it. Let us examine this point, and say: "God is, or He is not." But to which side shall we incline? Reason can settle nothing about the matter. An infinite chaos separates us from Him. At the end of this infinite distance a game is playing, and it will be heads or tails? Which will you bet on? Reasonably you cannot bet on one or other, you cannot back either.

Then don't accuse of error those who have made a choice, for you know nothing about it. No, you reply, but I shall blame them for having made, not this choice, but a choice; for since he who calls "heads" and the other are alike at fault, they are both wrong; the right thing is not to wager.

Yes, but you must wager. It is not optional, you are embarked in the business. Which will you choose, then? Let us see. Since we must choose, let us see which interests us least? You have two things to lose, truth and welfare; and two things to stake, your reason and your will, your knowledge and your happiness; and your nature has two things to avoid, mistake and misery. Whichever of the two you choose, reason is not offended, for you must necessarily choose. There is one point settled; but your happiness? Let us weigh the gain of choosing "heads" that God is. Let us estimate these two cases; if you gain, you gain all; if you

lose, you lose nothing. Wager then on His existence without hesitation. "That is quite true. Yes, I must wager; but perhaps I stake too much."

Let us see. Since there is equal chance of gain or loss, if you had the chance of gaining only two lives for one, still you might wager. But if there were three lives to gain you ought to play (since, in any case, you needs must play), and you would be imprudent, when you are forced to play, not to hazard your life to gain three lives at a game in which there is equal chance of loss and gain. But here is an eternity of life and happiness. That is so, well then should there be an infinity of chances of which you had but one, still you would be right to risk your chance to get two, and you would be acting foolishly (being compelled to play) to refuse to risk one life against three at a game in which, out of an infinity of chances, you had one, supposing there were an eternity of infinitely happy life to gain. Here is an infinity of infinitely happy life to gain, a chance of gain against a finite number of chances of loss, and what you stake is finite. The balance of gain and loss is apportioned. Wherever the infinite exists, and where there is not an infinity of chances of loss against that of gain, there is no need to weigh one with another, wager all. And thus, when one *must* play, we must renounce reason to keep life.

For it serves no purpose to say that it is uncertain if one will win, and certain that there is a risk, and that the infinite distance which

there is between the *certainty* which we risk, and the *uncertainty* of winning, makes the finite good, which is certainly staked equal to the uncertain infinite. That is not so. Every gambler stakes a certainty to gain an uncertainty, yet he risks a finite certainty to gain a finite uncertainty without offending against reason. There is no infinity of distance between the certainty of what is staked and the uncertainty of the gain; that is not so. There is, to be sure, an infinity between the certainty of gaining and the certainty of losing. But the uncertainty of gaining is proportioned to the certainty of the wagering in accordance with the proportion of chances of gain and loss, whence it comes that, if there are as many chances on one side as the other the game is on equal terms, and then the certainty in the matter of wagering is equal to the uncertainty in the matter of gaining, so far from being infinitely distant from it. And thus our proposition is of infinite force, if the finite is staked at a game in which there are equal chances of gain and loss, but the infinite to gain. This is demonstrable, and if men are capable of truth, this is one.[1] [2]

[1] M. Havet well remarks that Pascal objects to being "taken for a proposition," yet he treats the Deity and eternity as a game of chance, a calculation of odds in favour and against. With all his fervour and logic, Pascal often lacked imagination and common sense.

[2] Difficult to understand here and there, the argument as a whole is fairly comprehensible. We don't

I confess it, I admit it. But still, is there no means of seeing the "hands at the game?"[1] Yes, the Scripture and the rest, etc.

Yes, but I have my hands tied and my mouth dumb. I am forced to wager, and am not free; they do not let me go, and I am so made that I cannot believe. What would you have me do?

It is true, but learn at least your powerlessness to believe, for reason prompts you to believe,[2] and yet you cannot do it. Labour then to convince yourself, not by adding to the number of proofs of God's existence, but by lessening your passions. You want to believe, and you don't know the way. You wish to heal your unbelief, and you ask for the cure. Learn of those who have been bound like you, and yet who stake all they possess; they are those who know the way that you would follow, they are healed of the disease of which you would be healed. Follow the way by which they began. It was by making as though they believed,[3] by taking the holy water, by getting masses said, etc.; in accordance with

know whether there is a God; we venture a piece on His existence; we may lose or gain, lose in the pleasures of life, etc.—but the loss would be finite, the gain, if we win, an infinity of bliss. Pascal is fond of bold illustrations.

[1] Mr Kegan Paul's translation.

[2] Reason leads you to take the best chance in the game.

[3] "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord" (Hos. vi. 3).

your very nature[1] this will make you believe, and you will become foolish.[2]

But that is just what I fear. Why? What have you to lose?

But to show you that this course leads thither, it is this that will lessen your passions, which are your great obstacles, etc.

End of this Argument.

What hurt will you take by choosing this part? You will be faithful, honourable, grateful, beneficent, a true friend, sincere. To be sure you won't have tainted pleasures, such as glory, worldly delights, but will you not have other pleasures?

I tell you you will gain in this life, and that, at each step which you take along this road, you will see so much certainty of gain, so much nothingness in what you stake, that you will recognise at last that you have wagered on a thing certain, infinite, for which you have given nothing.

Oh, your words transport me, ravish me, etc.

If my argument pleases you and seems sound, know that it is that of a man who has thrown himself on his knees before making it, and after making it, to pray this Being infinite and impartial, to Whom he submits all his own existence,

[1] Habit is second nature. *Cf.* section v. of this chapter.

[2] "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. iii. 19).

that he may cause you, too, to submit to Him all of your existence, for your own benefit and for His glory, and that the force of the argument is proportionate to this self-abasement.

I (2)

One added to infinity augments it by nothing, no more than a foot added to a measure of infinite size. The finite is annihilated in presence of the infinite, and becomes absolutely nothing. Thus it is with our intelligence in the presence of God; thus with our justice in the presence of Divine justice.

The disproportion between our justice and that of God is less than between unity and infinity.[1]

The justice of God, like the pity of God, must be vast; well, His justice towards the reprobate is less vast and should shock us less than His pity towards the elect.

II

I should soon have left pleasure, say they, if I had faith. And I reply: You would soon have faith, if you had left your pleasures. Well it is for you to begin. If I could, I would give you faith. I cannot do it, nor test, therefore,

[1] The thought is not very difficult to understand; but it is not easy to see the connection. Miss Rawlings, alleging an obvious slip of the pen in the MS., translates: "There is more disproportion between our righteousness and God's, than between the unit and the infinite"; but neither M. Brunschvicg nor M. Havet notes any error.

the truth of what you say. But you can quit your pleasures, and prove if what I say is true.

III

The metaphysical proofs of God are so remote from man's reasoning, and so complicated, that their appeal has little force; and, even when they are of service to anyone, they serve but for the instant at which the proof is seen, but an hour afterwards we fear we have been deceived.

Jesus Christ is the aim and centre of all things. Who knows Christ knows the reason of all things.

Those who err, err from lack of seeing one of these two things. We may know God without knowing our misery, and may know our misery without knowing God; but we cannot know Jesus Christ without knowing at the same time both God and our misery.[1]

And that is why I shall not here undertake to prove by natural reason either the existence of God, or the Trinity, or the immortality of the soul, nor anything of this kind; not only because I should not feel myself sufficiently able to find in nature enough to convince hardened atheists; but also because this knowledge, without Jesus Christ, is useless and barren. When a man is persuaded that the proportions of numbers are truths immaterial, eternal, and dependent on an initial truth by which they exist, and which they call God, I shall not find him far advanced on the road to safety.

[1] For God, in Jesus Christ, died to save men from that misery.

IV

It is a remarkable thing that no canonical author has made use of nature to prove God. The aim of all has been to make us believe Him. David, Solomon, etc., have never said: Nature abhors a vacuum. Then there is a God.[1] Now they must have been more capable than the most capable people who have come since, and who have made use of such arguments. This is a thing well worth notice.

V

We must not make a mistake, we are as much automatic as intellectual, and from this it results that demonstration is not the sole persuasive influence. How few things are demonstrated! Proof convinces only the intelligence. The strongest and best believed proofs are those of custom. Custom inclines our automatic self, which draws along an unthinking intelligence. Who has demonstrated that there will be a to-morrow—that we shall die? Yet, what things are better believed? It is, then, custom which persuades us of these things. It is custom which makes so many Christians, which makes the Turks, the heathen, employments, soldiers, etc.

[1] Grotius. *De veritate religionis Christianæ* (Book i., chap. 7) points out that unless, contrary to its nature, water should flow upwards, voids would be left, and the coherence of matter be broken; hence the deduction—God makes water do this. The expression "Nature abhors a vacuum" is incorrect, as Pascal himself helped to prove. ("Life of Pascal," p. 9, note.)

So then we must have recourse to her, when once the intelligence has perceived the truth, so as to soak ourselves and dye ourselves with this belief which escapes us every hour; for it would be too much of a business to have the proofs always present. We must acquire a more easy form of belief, namely, that of habit, which, without violence, without art, without argument, makes us believe things, and inclines all our powers to this belief in such a way that our mind falls into it naturally. When we believe only by force of conviction, and the automaton is inclined to believe the contrary, it is not enough. So we must make both bits of us believe—the intelligence by reasons which it is enough to have once in a lifetime—the automaton by custom, and by not letting it incline to the contrary direction. I incline my heart, O God.[1] [2]

VI

Faith is different from proof; the latter is human, the former is a gift of God.

[1] Psalm cxix. *v.* 36, Pascal's favourite Psalm.

[2] According to his niece, Marguerite Perier, Pascal held Descartes' opinion that man alone has mind, that animals are automatons, machines. So then Pascal holds that man is animal, or machine, plus mind.

Chapter XI

The notes of true religion.

I

THE mark of true religion should be the obligation of loving the God of that religion.[1] This is assuredly so. And yet no religion has enjoined this, but ours has done so. Religion should have knowledge of lust and weakness; ours has this knowledge. It should apply remedies, one of them being prayer. No other religion has asked of God the power to love and follow him.

II

GOD HAS WILLED TO HIDE HIMSELF

If there were but one religion, God would be clear to recognise. If there were martyrs only in our religion, the same.

God being thus hidden, every religion which does not say that God is hidden is not true; and every religion which does not give the reason for this is not edifying. Ours does all this. *Vere tu es Deus absconditus.*[2]

III

DURATION

There would be too much obscurity if the truth had not visible signs. This is a remarkable sign of the truth that it be always preserved in a visible Church and assembly. There would be too

[1] Mark xii. 30. [2] Isaiah xlv. 15.

much clearness if there were but one opinion in this Church; but to find out which is the true opinion, one has but to see which is the one which has always been; for it is certain that the true doctrine has always been present, and that no false doctrine has always been present.[1]

The belief in a Messiah has always existed. The tradition of Adam recurs in Noah and Moses. Since then the prophets have predicted Him whilst predicting other things, the fulfilment of which, which men saw happen from time to time, marked the truth of their mission, and consequently the truth of their promises touching the Messiah. Jesus Christ worked miracles, and so too did the Apostles, who converted all the heathen; and thereby, all the prophecies being accomplished, the Messiah is proved for ever.

IV

When I regard the blindness and the misery of man, and see the whole universe dumb, and man without light, abandoned to himself, like a wanderer in this corner of the universe, ignorant of who has put him there, what he is there to do, what he will become when he dies, incapable of all knowledge, I am affrighted even

[1] M. Faugère cannot find this paragraph in any MS. However, as M. Havet points out, the "Il y aurait trop de clarté" rings genuine, has the "note" of Pascal. For the sentiment herein contained see the second *Provinciale*. J. H. Newman says much the same.

as a man[1] who has been carried whilst asleep to an island frightful and deserted, and who awakes without knowing where he is, and without means of escape. And hereupon I wonder why man, in so miserable estate, does not fall into despair. I see others besides me of nature like mine. I ask of them whether they are better instructed than I am. They tell me no; and upon this these wretched wanderers, looking round, and seeing some pleasant things, have given themselves to these, and attached themselves to these. But as for me I have not been able to attach myself to them, and considering how much it appears that there is something besides what I see, I have made research whether this God has not left some note of Himself.

I see many opposing religions, and so, too, all false except one. Each would be believed on its own authority, and menaces the unbelievers. I do not then believe them on that point. Any of them may say this. Any of them may call itself prophetic. But I see the Christian religion, in which the prophecies are fulfilled, and that is what none of them can show.

v

The only religion contrary to nature, contrary

[1] Pascal had first written—a child. Tennyson has some such idea—

> . . . but what am I?
> An infant crying in the night:
> An infant crying for the light:
> And with no language but a cry.
>
> *In Memoriam*, liv. 5.

to common sense, contrary to our pleasures, is the only religion which has always been.[1]

VI

The only knowledge which is contrary to common sense and human nature is the only knowledge which has always existed among men.

VII

The whole conduct of affairs ought to have as its aim the establishment and the greatness of religion; men ought to have in themselves opinions conformable to what she teaches; and, in fine, she ought to be to such an extent the object and the centre to which all things tend, that whoever shall know her principles shall be able to render a reason both of the whole nature of man in particular, and of the whole conduct of the world in general.

VIII

Proof.[2]—1. The Christian by being established so firmly, so quietly, being so contrary to nature. 2. The holiness, the exaltation, the humility of a Christian soul. 3. The marvels of the Holy Scripture. 4. Especially Jesus Christ. 5. Especially the Apostles. 6. Especially Moses and the prophets. 7. The Jewish people. 8. The prophecies. 9. Perpetuity. No other religion

[1] "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" (Luke xvi. 13). "If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. xv. 19).

[2] A summary of proofs of Christianity.

has perpetuity. 10. The doctrine, which gives a reason for everything. 11. The holiness of this[1] law. 12. By the behaviour of the world.[2]

It is indubitable that after this (chain of proof), we ought not to refuse, when we consider what life is and what this religion is, to follow our inclination, to follow it if it comes into our heart; and it is certain that there is no call to laugh at those who follow it.

Chapter XII

The work and grounds of true religion. Its double nature.

1

THE greatness and the wretchedness of man are so visible, that true religion must necessarily teach us both that there is some great principle of greatness in man, and that there is some great principle of misery. She must render us a reason for these astonishing contrarieties.

To render man happy she must show him that there is a God; that he must love Him; that our true happiness is in Him, and our sole ill is separation from Him, that she recognises that we are full of darkness which hinders us from knowing Him and loving Him; and that thus, our duty obliging us to love God, and our lusts turning

[1] This law—*i.e.* the Christian law.

[2] Proof of Christianity by the behaviour of the world towards it.

us away from Him, we are full of injustice. She must render us a reason for our opposition to God, and to our own good. She must teach us the remedy for this state of powerlessness, and the means for obtaining the remedy. Examine hereanent all the religions of the world, and see if there is any other but the Christian which satisfies on this point.

II

"I do not propose that you should submit your belief to me without reason, nor do I intend to subject you to tyranny. But I do not intend either to give you a reason for everything, and, in order to make these contrarieties accord, I propose to make you see clearly, by convincing proofs, by marks of divinity in me, which will convince you what I am, and which will attach authority to me by marvels and proofs which you could not refuse. Then you will believe willingly the things which I teach you, when you find no other cause for rejecting them, unless that you cannot yourselves know if they are or are not."

III

If there is but one beginning of everything, there is one end of everything: all by Him, all for Him. It is needful then that the true religion teach us to adore and love Him only. But as we find ourselves powerless to adore that which we know not, and to love anything but ourselves, the religion which teaches us these

duties should teach us also this powerlessness, and should teach us too the remedies for it. It teaches us that by a man all has been lost, and the link between God and us broken, and that by a man the link is repaired.

We are born so opposed to this love of God, and it is so necessary, that either we must have been born culpable, or God must be unjust.

IV

Original sin is foolishness in the eyes of man, but we grant this. You must not then cast in our teeth the lack of reason in this doctrine, since I grant that it is unreasonable. But this foolishness is wiser than all the wisdom of man, *sapientius est hominibus*.[1] For without this, what shall we say that man is? His whole condition depends on this incomprehensible thing. And how could he have comprehended it by reason, since it is a thing contrary to reason, and since man's reason, far from inventing it by its own means, avoids it when presented to it.[2]

V

Christianity is strange! It bids man recognise that he is vile, and even abominable, and bids him wish to be like God. Without such a counterpoise, either his high position would render him horribly vain, or his abasement would render him a complete outcast.

[1] 1 Cor. i. 25.

[2] Down, Reason, then; at least, vain reasonings down.

Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, line 322.

VI

Misery induces despair, pride induces presumption. The incarnation shows man the greatness of his misery by the greatness of the remedy which has been required.

VII

The philosophers did not enjoin opinions proportioned to our double condition. They inspired sentiments of pure greatness, and that is not the condition of man. They inspired sentiments of pure baseness, and that is not the condition of man. We must have feelings of debasement, not due to nature but to penitence; not so that we should remain in that condition, but pass from it to greatness. We must have emotions of greatness, not due to our deserts but to grace, and after having passed by our low estate.

VIII

No one is happy except a true Christian, nor reasonable, nor virtuous, nor lovable.

IX

Incomprehensible. Not everything which is incomprehensible cannot be. Infinite number, infinite space, equal to finite.[1]

[1] A mathematical figure. *The Port Royal Logic* (Part iv. chap. i.) proves the statement thus—half of a square, plus half of that half, and so on to infinity, equals the square; but there seems to be a confusion of ideas, you are merely infinitely subdividing finite space.

Incredible that God should unite Himself with us. This consideration arises from the sight of our low estate. But if you truly have it, follow it as far as I do, and recognise that we are in fact so low, that we are incapable of knowing of ourselves if His mercy cannot render us fit for Him. For I should like to know whence this animal[1] which knows itself to be so feeble, has the right to measure the mercy of God, and to place the bounds to it which his fancy suggests. He has so little knowledge of what God is, that he knows not what he is himself, and, anxious at the sight of his own condition, he dares to say that God cannot render him capable of communication with him!

But I would ask him whether God demands anything of him, but that he should know Him and love Him; and why he believes that God cannot make Himself knowable and lovable by him, since man is naturally capable of love and knowledge. There is no doubt that he at heart knows that he is, and that he loves something. Then, if he has some vision in the darkness where he is, and if he finds something to love among the things of earth, why, if God grants him some ray of His being, shall he be incapable of knowing and loving Him in the way in which it shall please Him to communicate Himself to us? Without doubt then, there is intolerable presumption in this sort of reasoning, although it appears to be founded on an obvious humility, which is neither sincere nor reasonable, if it

[1] Port Royal substitutes *creature*.

does not make us confess that, not knowing of ourselves who we are, we cannot learn it but from God.

Chapter XIII

The powers and limits of reason.

I

THE acme of reason is to recognise that there is an affinity of things which surpass her powers. She is but feeble, if her powers do not reach this knowledge. For if things natural are beyond her ken, what about things supernatural?

II

SUBMISSION

We must know how to doubt when we ought to doubt, to be sure when we ought to be sure, to submit when we ought to submit. He who does not so act does not comprehend the powers of reason. There are those who err against these three principles, either in being sure that everything is capable of proof, through failure of knowledge as to matters demonstrable, or by doubting about everything, through failure to recognise when one should submit; or by submitting in all things, through failure to know the occasion when one should decide for oneself.

II (2)

True Christianity consists of submission and the employment of reason.

III

Saint Augustine. Reason would never submit, unless she judged that there are occasions when she ought to submit. It is right that she should submit when she judges that she ought to submit.[1]

IV

It is no rare thing to have to rebuke men for too much docility. It is a vice as natural and as harmful as incredulity—superstition.

V

Nothing accords so well with reason as this disavowal of reason.

VI

Two excesses—to exclude reason, to admit nothing but reason.

VII

Faith is the right exponent of what the intelligence does not express, but not of things contrary to what it perceives. Faith is above, not contrary to, reason.

VIII

If I were to see a miracle, say they, I should be converted. How are they sure that they

[1] Port Royal naïvely adds: "But we must take care not to be deceived."—HAVET.

would become what they don't know anything about? They suppose that this conversion consists of acts of adoration which make of God's worship a particular kind of business and intercourse. True conversion consists in annihilating yourself before this universal Being whom you have angered so many times, and who can justly destroy you at any moment—in recognising that one can do nothing without Him, and that we have deserved of Him nothing but disgrace. It consists in knowing that there is an unconquerable repugnance between God and us, and that, without a mediator, we can have nought to do with Him.

IX

Do not be surprised at seeing simple people believe without reasoning. God gives them love of Him and hatred of themselves. He inclines their heart to believe. We shall never believe with useful and faithful belief unless God incline the heart; and we shall believe as soon as He shall incline the heart. David knew this well—"I incline my heart, O God."[1]

IX (2)

Those who believe without having read the Testaments, do so because they have a saintly disposition, and hear tell that our religion is agreeable to it. They feel that a God has made them. Their desire is to love God only, and to hate themselves.[2] They feel that they have no

[1] Psalm cxix. 36. [2] John xii. 25.

strength in themselves; that they are incapable of going to God; and that, if God does not come to them, they are incapable of any communication with Him. And they are told in our religion that they have but to love God, and hate themselves; but that being entirely corrupted and unfit for God, God has become man to unite Himself to us. There needs no more to persuade men who have this disposition in their heart, and who have this knowledge of their duty and their incapacity.

X

Those whom we see Christians without the knowledge of prophecies and proofs do not fail to judge of Christianity as well as those who have this knowledge. They judge of it by the heart, as others judge of it by the intelligence. It is God Himself Who inclines them to believe, and thus they are very effectually persuaded.

I admit that one of these Christians who believe without proofs will not have perhaps the means of convincing an unbeliever who shall say as much for himself.[1] But those who know the proofs of religion can prove without difficulty that such a believer is truly inspired by God, although He cannot prove it Himself. For God, having said in His prophets, which are prophets without a doubt, that in the reign of Jesus Christ He will pour out His spirit upon all nations, and that the sons, the daughters, and

[1] *i.e.* that he sees no proofs.

the children of the Church shall prophesy, there is no doubt that God's spirit is on these, and not on the others.[1]

Chapter XIV

Death and Doubt.

I

IT is absurd of us to rely on the society of our kind. Wretches as we are, powerless as we are, they will not help us. We die alone. Then we should act as though we were alone. Would we then build lofty houses, etc.? We should seek the truth without hesitation, and if we reject it, our witness is that we esteem higher the regard of men than the search after truth.

II

This is what I see, and what troubles me. I look everywhere, and I see nothing but darkness. Nature offers me nothing which is not matter for doubt and disquietude. If I saw nothing there which pointed to a Divinity, I should determine that there is no God. If I saw everywhere signs of a Creator, I should rest in peace in the faith. But, seeing too much for denial, and too little for assurance, I am in a piteous plight, a plight in which I have wished a hundred times that, if God sustains her,[2] she

[1] Joel ii. 28. [2] Nature.

should show it forth without doubt; and that, if the signs which she gives are treacherous, she should suppress them altogether—that she should tell all or nothing, so that I could see which side to take, instead of being in this position, that in the state in which I am, ignorant of what I am and of what I ought to do, I know neither my condition nor my duty. All my heart is eager to know where is the truly good, that I may take it. Nothing would be too great a sacrifice to gain eternity.[1]

[1] Voltaire calls this the best of Pascal's *Pensées*. It is followed in some editions by a rather detailed examination of certain foundations of Christian belief, such as the continuity of the Jewish race and religion, the early existence of law among the Jews, etc.—arguments too long for the present work.

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

The Jewish religion. Its double intention. Pascal's religion.

I

THE prophecies have a hidden meaning, the spiritual, to which the (Jewish) people was inimical, beneath the carnal, to which it was friendly. If the spiritual meaning had been disclosed, they would not have been capable of loving it; and not being able to endure it, they would not have had the zeal sufficient for the preservation of their books and ceremonies.[1]

II

Fac secundum exemplar quod tibi ostensum est in monte.[2] The Jewish religion then was formed on its correspondence with the truth of the Messiah; and the truth of the Messiah was recognised by means of the religion of the Jews, which was the type of it.

In the Jews the truth was only shadowed

[1] Elsewhere Pascal speaks of the Old Testament as made to blind some and illumine others. *Cf.* note to p. 165.

[2] Exodus xxv. 40.

forth. In heaven it is revealed. In the Church it is concealed, and recognised by its correspondence with the type. The type was founded on truth, and the truth was recognised from the type.

III

He who shall judge of the Jewish religion by their carnal ones will judge it ill. It is seen in the sacred books, and in the tradition of the prophets, which have shown clearly enough that they did not understand the law literally. Thus our religion is divine in the Evangelists, the Apostles, and tradition ; but it is absurd in the case of those who misinterpret it.

The Messiah, according to the carnal Jews, would be a great temporal king. Jesus Christ, according to the carnal Christians,[1] has come to free us from the obligation of loving God, and to give us sacraments which do everything without us. Neither the one nor the other is the Christian religion, nor the Jewish. The true Jews and the true Christians have always awaited a Messiah who should make them love God, and, by that love, triumph over their enemies.[2]

III (2)

TWO KINDS OF MEN IN EACH RELIGION

Among the heathen some worshippers of beasts, and others worshippers in natural religion of one God. Among the Jews, the carnal and

[1] The carnal Christians—probably the Jesuits.
[2] Their enemies—*i.e.* their spiritual enemies.

the spiritual, who were the Christians of the old law. Among the Christians, the materialistic, who are the Jews of the new law. The carnal Jews expected a carnal Messiah, and the materialistic Christians believe that the Messiah has freed them from the necessity of loving God. The true Jews and the true Christians adore a Messiah who makes them love God.

IV

The carnal Jews and the heathen have their miseries, and the Christians have theirs. There is no Redeemer for the heathen, for they do not even hope for one. There is no Redeemer for the Jews; they hope for him in vain. There is no Redeemer except for the Christians.

V

The carnal Jews occupy a midway position between the Christians and the heathen. The heathen know not God, and love earthly things only. The Jews know the true God, and love earthly things only. The Christians know the true God, and have no love for the world. The Jews and the heathen esteem the same things good. The Jews were of two kinds: the one kind had heathen affections, the other kind Christian affections.

VI

Henceforward I reject all other religions; in this I find a reply to all objections. It is just that a God so pure should not discover

Himself but to the pure in heart. Henceforth I love this religion, and I find its divine morality a sufficient authority for it; but I find more effective force in the fact that as far back as the memory of man endures, it has been constantly announced to men that they are in a state of universal corruption, but that One will come to heal them. I find that not one man only says this, but an infinite number of men, with a whole people prophesying and expressly made for the purpose, through a period of four thousand years. . . . And therefore I stretch forth my hands to my Saviour, Who, predicted for four thousand years, has come to suffer and to die for me upon the earth at the time and under the circumstances which have been predicted of Him; and, by His grace, I await death in peace, in the hope of being eternally united to Him; and yet I live with joy, whether amid the good things which it pleases Him to give me, or in the ills which He sends me for my good, and which He has taught me by His example to endure.[1]

I love poverty, because He loved it. I love wealth, because it gives me the means with which to assist the wretched. I am loyal to all. I do not render evil to those who have rendered it to me; but I wish for them a condition similar to mine, in which they receive

[1] I venture here to insert, rather out of its place according to the order of this selection, an exquisite fragment which continues the thought. See also the Life by Mme. Perier, p. 40.

neither evil nor good from man. I try to be just, true, sincere, and faithful to every one, and my heart is tender towards those to whom God has closely united me, . . . and whether I am alone or in the sight of men, in all my actions I keep God before my eyes, God Who will judge of all my actions, and to Whom I have consecrated them all. This is my view of things; and every day of my life I bless my Redeemer Who has put such a mind in me, and Who, of a man full of feebleness, of misery, of lust, of pride, and of ambition, by the power of His grace, to which all the glory for it is due, when I had in me great misery and sin, has made of me a man exempt from all these evils.[1]

Chapter II

Types and hidden meanings.

1

MOSES was the first to teach the Trinity, original sin, the Messiah. David — a great witness, royal, good, merciful, fair of heart, intelligent, powerful—he prophesies, and his miracles come to pass. This is infinite. He had but to say that he was the Messiah, if he had had the vanity to do so; for the

[1] This passage originally commenced: "J'aime tous les hommes comme mes frères parce qu'ils sont tous rachetés;" but Pascal scratched these words out; probably because they are contrary to his view that only the elect are in reality redeemed.

prophecies point more clearly to him than to Jesus Christ.[1] And Saint John[2] the same.

II

TYPES

If we try to show that the Old Testament is but figurative, and that by temporal goods the prophets signify other goods, this is, in the first place, unworthy of God; secondly, their discourses express very clearly the promise of temporal goods, and yet they say that their discourses are obscure, and that their meaning will not be understood. From which it appears that this hidden meaning is not that which they express openly, and that, consequently, they meant to speak of other sacrifices, of another liberator, etc. They say that people will not understand them until the end of time.[3]

The third proof is that their discourses oppose and destroy one another in such a way that, if we consider that by the words on law and sacrifice they meant nothing else but the laws and sacrifices of Moses, there is contradiction manifest and gross. Then they did mean something else, contradicting themselves sometimes in the same chapter.

III

THE CIPHER WITH TWO MEANINGS

When we intercept an important letter in which we find a clear meaning and where never-

[1] "For the prophecies, etc."—suppressed by Port Royal.

[2] John the Baptist.

[3] Jer. xxx. 24.

theless it is said that the meaning is veiled and obscure; that it is hidden, so that you shall see this letter without seeing it, and hear it without hearing it; what should one think, except that it is a cipher with two meanings, and still more shall we think so when we find things manifestly contrary to one another in the literal sense? How highly then should we esteem those who decipher the cipher and teach us to understand the hidden meaning; and especially when the principles which they show forth are natural and clear. This is what Jesus Christ has done and the Apostles. They broke the seal. He rent the veil and discovered the spirit. They have thus taught us that the enemies of man are passions; that the Redeemer is to be spiritual and His reign spiritual; that there are to be two advents—the one of misery, in order to abase proud man, the other of glory, to raise man abased; that Jesus Christ is God and man. The prophets said clearly that Israel would always be loved of God, and that the law would be for ever; and they have said that people would not understand their meaning and that it would be veiled.

IV

THE LAW WAS FIGURATIVE: TYPES

The letter kills.[1] All came in types. See the cipher which Saint Paul gives us. It was necessary that Christ should suffer.[2] A God

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 6. [2] Luke xxiv. 46; Heb. viii. 3.

humbled.[1] Circumcision of the heart,[2] true fasting,[3] true sacrifice,[4] true temple.[5] The prophets have indicated that all this must be spiritual.

V

Love is the sole concern of Scripture. That which does not speak of this sole end is the type of it. For, since there is but one end, all which does not speak of this in so many words is type of it.

VI

The Rabbis take the breasts of the spouse[6] as types, as they take everything else which does not express their sole object, which was temporal good. And Christians take even the Eucharist as type of the glory whither they tend.[7]

VII

There are those who see clearly that there is no other enemy of man than the lusts of the flesh, which turn him aside from God, that God is not his enemy, and that there is no other good than God, that a fat[8] land is not a good. As for

[1] Phil. ii. 8. [2] Rom. ii. 29. [3] Matt. vi. 16, 17, 18.
[4] Heb. vii. 27. [5] Heb. viii. 2.
[6] In Solomon's Song.
[7] Port Royal suppressed these lines. The Institution was accused *of not believing the mystery of transubstantiation, nor the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist* —see the 16th *Provinciale*—and it was thought that the word "type" might give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme.
[8] Neh. ix. 25, etc.

those who believe that man's good is fleshly, and his evil that which turns him from the pleasures of the senses, let them satisfy themselves in them and die in them. But as for those who seek God with all their heart, whose only grief it is to be deprived of the sight of Him, who have no desire but to possess Him, and no enemies but those who turn them aside from Him, who are grieved at seeing themselves surrounded and dominated by such enemies—let these console themselves, I tell them good news: there is for them a liberator; I will show Him to them; I will show them that there is a God for them; to the others I will not show Him. I will make them see that a Messiah has been promised Who is to free from enemies, and that one has come already to deliver from sins, but not from enemies.

VIII

All these sacrifices and ceremonies were types or follies. Now there are things which we clearly know to be too high for us to think them follies.

Chapter III

The three orders of greatness—that of the world, that of intellect, that of love. The greatness and low estate of Jesus Christ. Christ is the centre of the old order and the new.

1

THE infinite distance between body and mind is a type of the distance infinitely more infinite between the mind and love,[1] for love is supernatural.

All the splendour of greatness has no lustre for those who seek understanding. The greatness of those who understand is invisible to kings, to rich men, to captains, to all the carnally great. The greatness of wisdom, which is nought if not of God, is invisible to the carnal and to the men of understanding. There are three orders of greatness differing in kind.

The great geniuses have their empire, their glory, their greatness, their victory, and their lustre, and have no need of carnal greatness, with which their greatness has no connection. They are seen not by the eye, but by the intelligence. It is enough. The saints have their empire, their glory, their victory, their lustre, and have no need of carnal nor intellectual greatness, with which their greatness

[1] The love of God.

has nought to do, for these things neither add to nor take away from it. They are seen of God and the angels, and not of the eye, nor the inquisitive intelligence. God suffices them.

Archimedes without pomp would be equally venerated. He did not fight battles for men to gaze at, but he provided his inventions for all the intelligent. O, how bright is his genius in men's minds, Jesus Christ, without wealth, and without any outward exhibition of science, is in His own order of holiness. He has invented nothing; He has not reigned; but He has been humble, patient, holy, holy to God, a scourge of devils, sinless. O, how great is the pomp, and how prodigious the magnificence in which He has come to the eyes of the heart which see wisdom!

It would have been useless for Archimedes to have played the prince in books on geometry, prince though he was.[1] It would have been useless for our Lord Jesus Christ to come as a king, and shine in a reign of holiness; but He came with the glory of His order.

It is absurd to be scandalised at the low estate of Jesus Christ, as if this low estate is of the same order as the greatness which He came to show. Let us consider this greatness in His life, in His passion, in His obscurity, in His death, in the choice of His disciples, in their

[1] Archimedes, related to King Hiero (Plutarch); but Cicero speaks of him as a man in a humble position (*Tuscul.* v. 23).

abandonment of Him, in His secret resurrection, and the rest, we shall find Him so great that we shall have no cause to be scandalised at a low estate which does not exist. But there are those who cannot admire anything but carnal greatness, as though there were no intellectual greatness; and others who admire only spiritual greatness, as though there were not infinitely higher greatness in wisdom.

All bodies, the firmament, the stars, the earth and its kingdoms, are not worth the smallest mind, for it knows all this and itself, and the bodies know nothing. All the bodies together, and all the minds together, and all their productions are not worth the least motion of love; this is of an infinitely higher order.

Of all the bodies one could not make a little thought; this is impossible, and in another order. From all the bodies and minds we could not get a motion of true love; this is impossible; it is of another order—the supernatural.

II

Jesus Christ in an obscurity (according to what the world calls obscurity) such that the historians, writing only of the important matters of States, have hardly noticed Him.

What man ever had more glory! The whole Jewish people predicts Him before His coming. The Gentile people adores Him after His coming. The two peoples, Gentile and Jewish, regard Him as their centre. And yet what man ever

less enjoyed such glory! Of thirty-three years He lived thirty without appearing. During three years He passes as an impostor; the priests and chief men reject Him; His friends and nearest ones despise Him. And then He dies, betrayed by one of His disciples, denied by another, abandoned by all.

What part has He then in this glory? Never man has had so much glory; never man has had so much shame. All this glory has been of service to us only, to render Him recognisable by us, and He has had none of it for Himself.

III

PROOFS OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ said great things so simply that it seems as though He had never thought them [1] and yet so precisely that we see quite well what He thought about them. It is wonderful this clearness joined to this simplicity.

IV

Jesus Christ is a God Whom we can approach without pride, and beneath Whom we can abase ourselves without despair.

V

Jesus Christ, Whom the two Testaments regard, the Old as its hope, the New as its model, both as their centre.

[1] Instead of "qu'il semble qu'il ne les a pas pensées," Port Royal put "qu'il semble qu'il n'y a pas pensé"

Chapter IV

The prophecies prove Jesus Christ, and prepare the way for Him.

I

THE prophecies are the greatest of the proofs of Jesus Christ. And it is in this matter that God has exercised the greatest foresight, for the object which has filled them is a miracle lasting from the birth of the Church to its end. Thus for six hundred years God has raised up the prophets, and during four hundred years after He has scattered all these prophecies with all the Jews, who carried them to all parts of the world. Behold what preparation there has been for the birth of Jesus Christ, whose gospel was to be believed throughout all the world; there has needed not only prophecies to make it believed, but that these prophecies should be throughout the world, so that it should embrace all the world.

II

PROPHECIES

If a single man had written a book of predictions concerning Jesus Christ, as to the time and manner (of His coming), and Jesus Christ had come conformably with these prophecies, that would be a fact of infinite power. But there is much more here. It is a succession

of men lasting four thousand years, who, constantly, and without variation, come, one after another, to predict this same event. It is a whole people which announces Him, and which lasts four thousand years to give a mass of evidence of the assurance which it has, and from which it cannot be turned aside by any threats or persecutions. This is far more important.

III

He will teach men the perfect way (Is. ii. 3).[1] And never has there been before nor since any man who has taught any divine thing which approaches this.

IV

. . . Then Jesus Christ comes to tell men that they have no other enemies than themselves; that it is their passions which separate them from God; that He is come to destroy them and to give men His grace, so as to make of them all a holy church: that He is come to gather into this church both heathen and Jew; that He is come to destroy the idols of some and the superstition of others.

To this all men are opposed, not only because of the natural opposition of their lusts, but, above all, the kings of the earth unite to abolish this newly-born religion, as it had been predicted. *Quare fremuerunt gentes. Reges terræ adversus Christum.*[2]

[1] The Vulgate says—docebit nos vias suas.
[2] Psalm ii. 1, 2.

All the great ones of the earth unite—men of science, the wise, the rulers. Some write, others condemn, others slay.[1] And, notwithstanding all these oppositions, these weak and simple folk resist all these powers, and bring into submission these kings, these scientific men, these philosophers, and take away idolatry from all the world. And all this is done by the power which had predicted Him.[2]

Chapter V

The Jewish, Mahometan and Christian Religions.

I

IT is a thing remarkable, and worthy of special attention, to see this Jewish people existing for so many years, and always wretched: it being necessary, as proof of Jesus Christ, that it should exist to prove Him, and that it should be wretched because it has crucified Him; and, though misery and continuance are contraries, yet it continues to exist, despite its misery.

II

Our religion is so divine that another divine[3] religion was its foundation merely.

[1] Pascal is thinking probably of Port Royal, its persecution and its defenders, himself in chief.

[2] *i.e.* the Divine power.

[3] The Jewish.

III

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MAHOMET AND JESUS CHRIST

Mahomet, not foretold; Jesus Christ, foretold. Mahomet, slaying; Jesus Christ, bringing death to His own followers. Mahomet, forbidding to read;[1] the apostles bidding us read.[2] The two are so contrary that if Mahomet took the way to succeed humanly, Jesus Christ took the way to perish humanly. And instead of concluding that, since Mahomet has succeeded, Jesus Christ ought certainly to have succeeded, we must say that, since Mahomet has succeeded, Jesus Christ should have perished.

CHAPTER VI

God is seen of some, hidden from others.

I

GOD has willed to redeem men, and open the way of safety to those who shall seek Him. But men make themselves so unworthy of safety that it is just that God should refuse to some, in consequence of their hardness of heart, what He grants to others by a compassion which is not their due. If He had willed to

[1] Whether Mahomet did this may be doubted.

[2] 1 Tim. iv. 13. Port Royal maintained the right and duty of reading the Scriptures; but the Roman Church has often refused this right.

overcome the obstinacy of the most hardened, He could have done it by discovering Himself so clearly to them that they would not have doubted of the truth of His Being, like as He will show Himself on the last day, in such a crash of thunderings, and such an upturning of nature, that the dead will arise, and the blindest will see Him.

It is not thus that He has willed to appear in the dispensation of mercy; because so many men render themselves unworthy of His clemency, He has willed to leave them deprived of the good which they will not have. It was not then just that He should appear in a manner manifestly divine, and absolutely capable of convincing men; but it was not just either that He should come in a way so hidden that He could not be recognised by those who should seek Him truly. He has willed to make Himself perfectly recognisable to these; and thus, wishing to be manifest to those who seek Him with all their heart, and hidden to those who avoid Him with all their heart, He tempers the knowledge of Himself in such a way that He has given marks of Himself, visible to those who seek Him, and not visible to those who do not seek Him. There is light sufficient for those whose only desire it is to see, and darkness sufficient for those whose disposition is the contrary. There is light enough to lighten the elect, and darkness enough to humble them. There is darkness enough to blind the reprobate, and light enough to condemn them and

render them inexcusable. (Saint Augustine, Montaigne, Sebonde.[1])

II

If the world existed to teach man about God, His divinity would lighten every part of it in a way which could not be gainsayed; but, as it exists but by Jesus Christ and for Jesus Christ, and to teach men their corruption and their redemption, everything is bright with proofs of these two truths. What we see in the world shows neither a total exclusion, nor a clear manifestation of divinity, but the presence of a God Who hides Himself: everything bears this character.

If God had in no way discovered Himself, this eternal absence would be equivocal, and might indicate either the absence of all divinity, or the unworthiness of man to know it. But the fact that He appears sometimes, and not always—this removes the equivocal. If once He shows Himself, He *is* always; and thus, what conclusion can one come to, but that there is a God, and that men are unworthy of Him?

III (1)

God wishes rather to influence the will than the mind. Perfect clearness would serve the mind and injure the will. To humble the proud.

[1] Apparently a disquisition of Pascal upon Saint Augustine, and upon Montaigne's *Apologie de Sebonde*.

III (2)

If there were no obscurity, man would not feel his corruption; if there were no light, man would have no hope of redress. Thus it is not only just but useful for us that God should be partly hidden, and partly manifest, since it is equally dangerous to man to know God without knowing his misery, and to know his misery without knowing God.

IV

What say the prophets of Jesus Christ? That it will be clear that He is God? No, but that He is indeed a hidden God, that He will be misunderstood, that people will not think it is He, that He will be a stone of stumbling against which many will strike, etc. Let them not then reproach us any longer with the want of clearness, since that is just what we declare.

V

In order to leave the wicked in their blindness, Jesus Christ does not say that He is not of Nazareth, nor that He is not the son of Joseph.

VI

Objection: Scripture is plainly full of things not dictated by the Holy Spirit. Reply: Then they do no injury to the faith. Objection: But the Church has decided that it all proceeds from the Holy Spirit. Reply: I answer two things:

1. That the Church has not decided that; the other, that when she shall have so decided, the position may be maintained.

VII

We understand nothing of the works of God, if we do not take it as our starting-point that He has willed to blind some, to lighten others.[1]

Chapter VII

Nature does not prove God. Only in and by Jesus Christ do we know God.

I

I WONDER at the boldness with which these persons[2] undertake to speak of God when they address their works to unbelievers. Their first chapter aims at proving the existence of God by the works of nature.

I should not be surprised at this conduct if they were addressing believers, for it is certain (that those) who have a lively faith

[1] *Cf.* Introduction, p. xviii. In another fragment, Pascal refers to Isaiah vi. 10, etc., as foundation, a singularly inadequate foundation, one would think, for this dreadful doctrine. "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes," etc.; but his argument is logical from his point of view that the Jewish people and religion are merely typical, that all such statements refer to the Christian Church.

[2] Those who try to prove God by nature.

in the heart see at once that all that is is nothing but the work of the God whom they adore.[1] But for those in whom this light is extinguished, and in whom they design to rekindle it, those destitute of faith and grace, who, seeking with all the light they have, all that they see in nature which can lead them to this knowledge, find nothing but obscurity and darkness—to say to such as these that they have only to look at the least of the things which surround them, and they will see God manifest in it, and to give them as sole proof of this great and important matter the course of the moon and the planets,[2] and to affirm that they have proved their case by such talk as that, is to give them grounds for believing that the proofs of our religion are very weak; and I find by reason and experience that nothing is more fitted to arouse in them a feeling of contempt.

This is not the way in which Scripture, which better knows the things of God, speaks of these people. On the contrary, Scripture says that God is a hidden God, and that, since nature became corrupt, God has left them in a blindness from which they cannot escape but through Jesus Christ, without whom there is no communication with God. *Nemo novit Patrem,*[3] *nisi Filius, et cui voluerit Filius revelare.*

[1] Psalm xix. i.

[2] *Cf.* Grotius, *De Verit. Relig. Christ.*, i. 7.

[3] Matt. xi. 27. The actual words of the Vulgate are . . . *neque Patrem quis novit.*

This is what Scripture points out for us when it says, in so many places, that those who seek God find Him.[1]

Scripture does not speak of this light as though it were a mid-day sun. It by no means says that those who seek this mid-day sun, this water in the ocean, will find it; so then the evidence of God is clearly not natural evidence. So, too, elsewhere Scripture says: *Vere tu es Deus absconditus.*[2]

II

The God of the Christians is not merely a God who is simply the author of geometrical truths and of the order of the elements—that is the view of Pagans and Epicureans. He is not merely a God Who exercises His providence on the life and well-being of man, to grant a happy succession of years to those who adore Him—that is the portion of the Jews. But the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob,[3] the God of the Christians, is a God of love and of consolation. He is a God Who fills all the soul and heart of those whom He possesses. He is a God Who makes them feel their inward misery and His infinite pity, Who is

[1] Matt. vii. 7; Luke xi. 9.

[2] Isaiah xlv. 15—a text quoted again and again by Pascal.

[3] Pascal divides Jews as he divides Christians, into two classes—the carnal and the spiritual; those who love God and see beyond types and figures, and the others. The Patriarchs are the representatives of the spiritual Jews.

in union with the depth of their soul, Who fills it with humility, with joy, with confidence, with love, Who makes them incapable of any other end than Himself.

III

The God of the Christians is a God Who makes the soul feel that He is its only good; that all peace is in Him, and that it can have no joy but love of Him; and He is a God too, Who at the same time makes the soul abhor the fetters which hold it back, and prevent it from loving God with all its might. The love of self and lusts which hinder the soul are intolerable to God. This God makes it feel that it has this foundation of self love which is ruining it, and that He alone can heal it.

IV

The knowledge of God without the knowledge of our wretchedness produces pride. The knowledge of our wretchedness without the knowledge of God produces despair. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the mean, for in Him we find both God and our wretchedness.

V

All those who seek God outside Jesus Christ, and who stop at Nature, find there no satisfying light, but endeavour to form for themselves a means of knowing God and serving Him without a mediator, and in this way they fall, either into atheism, or into deism, which are two things almost equally abhorrent to the Christian religion.

VI

GOD BY JESUS CHRIST

We only know God by Jesus Christ. Without this mediator, all communication with God is taken away; by Jesus Christ we know God. All those who have pretended to know and prove God without Jesus Christ had but powerless proofs. But, to prove Jesus Christ, we have the prophecies, which are solid and palpable proofs. And these prophecies, being accomplished and proved true by the event, show the certainty of these[1] truths, and are therefore proof of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Thus we know God in Him and by Him. Apart from this knowledge, and without Scripture, without original sin, without a necessary mediator promised and come, we cannot absolutely prove God, nor teach sound doctrine nor sound morality. But by Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ, we prove God, and teach morals and doctrine. Then Jesus Christ is the real God of men.

But at the same time we learn our misery, for this God is nothing else than He Who mends our misery. Thus we cannot know God well without knowing our wickedness.

VII

Not only do we know God only through Jesus Christ, but we know ourselves only through Jesus Christ. We only know life and death

[1] *i.e.* the above.

through Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus Christ we know not what our life is, nor our death, nor God, nor ourselves.

Thus without the Scripture, which has Jesus Christ alone for its object, we know nothing, and see nothing but obscurity and confusion in the nature of God, and in our own nature.

CHAPTER VIII

Miracles.

I

COMMENCEMENT

MIRACLES attest the truth of doctrine, and doctrine attests the truth of miracles.

There are false and true miracles. They must have a sign by which we may recognise them; without this they are useless. Now they are not useless, but on the contrary fundamental. But the rule which He[1] gives us must be such that it does not destroy the proof which true miracles give of the truth, which is the chief end of miracles.

Moses has given two rules: That the prediction does not come to pass (Deut. xviii. 22); and, That they do not lead to idolatry (Deut. xiii. 2, 3); and Jesus Christ one.[2]

If doctrine regulate miracles, miracles are useless for doctrine.

[1] God. [2] Mark ix. 39.

II

When we see a miracle we must submit to its truth in default of remarkable proofs to the contrary. We must see if it denies a God, or Jesus Christ or the Church.

III

Were there no false miracles, there would be certainty. Were there no rule to discern them, the miracles would be useless, and there would be no reason to believe. Now humanly speaking there is no human certainty but reason.[1]

IV

All religion is false which, in its faith, does not adore a God as the prime cause of all things, and which, in its moral teaching, does not love one only God as the object of all things.

V

The proofs which Jesus Christ and the Apostles adduce from Scripture do not amount to demonstration; for they merely say that Moses has said that a prophet would come, but this does not prove that it would be He, and that is the whole question. These passages serve only to show that it is not contrary to Scripture, that there is no opposition, but not that there is accord. Now this is sufficient, exclusion of opposition, with miracles.

[1] Port Royal eliminated this last paragraph, as obscure. Various explanations are given. Perhaps it implies—We must use our human reason, which, humanly speaking, is a sure guide, to decide by the rules whether the miracle be false or true.

VI

Jesus Christ never verified His Messiahship by resting the truth of His doctrine on Scripture and the prophecies, but always by miracles. He proves that He remits sins by a miracle.[1]

Nicodemus recognises by his miracles that his doctrine is of God. *Scimus quia venisti a Deo magister*; *nemo enim potest facere quæ tu facis, nisi fuerit Deus cum illo.*[2] He does not judge of miracles by doctrine, but of doctrine by miracles.

VII

There is a reciprocal duty between God and man. We must pardon this expression—*Quid debui?*[3] Arraign me, says God in Isaiah.[4] God ought to fulfil His promises, etc.

Men owe it to God to receive the religion which He sends them. God owes it to men not to lead them into error. But they would be led into error if miracle makers should give out a doctrine which to the eye of common sense did not clearly appear to be false, and if a greater miracle maker had not already warned them not to believe it. Thus, if there were a division in the Church, and the Arians, for instance, who, like the Catholics, claim Scripture as their

[1] Mark ii. 10-12; Luke v. 20-25.

[2] John iii. 2. The text in the Vulgate reads . . . *nemo enim potest hæc signa facere*, etc.

[3] Isaiah v. 4. *Quid est quod debui ultra facere*, etc. What more ought I to have done, etc. The author of the expression is not to be blamed, for God permits the arraignment of God.

[4] Isaiah i. 18.

foundation, if these were to do miracles, and not the Catholics, we should have been led into error. For, as a man who announces to us the secrets of God is not worthy of credence on his own private authority, and on this account unbelievers doubt him, so a man who, as a sign of his association with God, raises the dead, predicts the future, moves seas, heals the sick, there is no unbeliever but must surrender to him, and the incredulity of Pharaoh and the Pharisees is the result of supernatural hardness. When we see miracles and sure doctrine together there is no difficulty. But when we see miracles and suspicious doctrine together, then we must see which is the clearer. Jesus Christ was suspected.

VIII

John vii. 40.[1] Contention amongst the Jews, as amongst the Christians of to-day. Some believed in Jesus Christ; others did not believe, on account of the prophecies, which said that He must be born in Bethlehem. They should have taken better care to see whether He were not of Bethlehem. For His miracles being convincing, they should have made quite certain of these supposed contradictions of His doctrine by Scripture; and this obscurity did not excuse them but blinded them. Thus those who refuse to believe the miracles of to-day in consequence of an alleged chimerical contradiction, are not excused.

[1] John vii. 40-43.

IX

Miracles are more important than you suppose. They have served as the foundation of the Church, and will serve to continue it until Antichrist, until the end.

X

These nuns, astonished at what they say—that they are on the road to perdition, that their confessors are leading them to Geneva, are teaching them that Jesus Christ is not present in the Eucharist, nor on the right hand of the Father—they know that all this is false; they present themselves then to God in this state. *Vide si via iniquitatis in me est.*[1] And what happens? This place, which, they tell us, is the temple of the devil, God has made of it His temple. They say, you must take away the children from it. God heals them there. They say that it is the arsenal of hell. God makes of it the sanctuary of His grace. Finally, they threaten them with all the rage and all the vengeance of heaven, and God overwhelms them with His favours. One must be dead to common sense to conclude that they are in the way of perdition.[2]

XI

The three notes of religion: perpetuity, good life, miracles.

[1] Psalm cxxxix. 24.

[2] The fragment refers to the nuns of Port Royal, calumniated by the Jesuits, justified of God by the miracle of the Holy Thorn. See *Introduction*, p. xxxi.

XII

Both Jews and Christians had been told that they should not believe all prophets. Pharisees and scribes make a great to do about His miracles, and try to show that they are false, or worked by the devil, for they must needs be convinced if they recognised that they are of God.

To-day we have not the trouble of thus discerning. Yet the discernment is easy: those who neither deny God, nor Jesus Christ, do no uncertain miracles. *Nemo faciat virtutem in nomine meo, et cito possit de me male loqui.*[1] But there is no need for us to discern.

XIII

Here is a thorn from the crown of the Saviour of the world, in which the Prince of this world has no power, which does miracles by the inherent power of this blood shed for us. See how God Himself chose this house, there to magnify His fame.[2]

XIV

Miracles are no longer necessary because they have been already. But when we listen no longer to tradition; when they propose nought

[1] Mark ix. 38. . . . *Nemo est enim qui faciat virtutem in nomine meo, et possit cito male loqui de me.* In the English Authorised Version, v. 39.

[2] A reference to the miracle of the Holy Thorn, which was the originating cause of the *Pensées*, according to Madame Perier, Pascal's sister. See *Life*, p. 20.

but the Pope; when he has been taken unawares;[1] and when having thus excluded the real source of truth, which is tradition, and having prejudiced the Pope, who is the depositary of truth, truth has no longer freedom to appear; so then, men speaking truth no longer, truth ought herself speak to men. This was what happened in the days of Arius.[1]

XV

A miracle is a result which exceeds the natural power of the means employed; and a non-miracle is that which does not exceed the natural power of the means employed.

Thus those who heal by the invocation of the devil do no miracle, because that does not exceed the natural power of the devil. But . . .

CHAPTER IX

The power of reason. The power of inspiration. The value of Tradition. Thoughts on the Pope, on Jesuits, and Jansenists.

I

THE method of God, Who does all things gently, is to place religion in the intellect by reason, and in the heart by grace. But to desire to place it in the mind and in the heart by force

[1] I here condense a valuable note by M. Havet. In the days of Arius, Saint Athanasius was persecuted; now it [illegible] Arnauld. Pope Liberius was taken unawares, and signed an Arian Dogma (an argument against Papal infallibility). Innocent X. and Alexander VII.

and menaces, that is to place in it not religion but terror, *terrorem potius quam religionem.*

II

The heart has its reasons, which reason knows not of; in a thousand things we know it is so. I affirm that the heart by nature loves the Universal Being, and by nature loves itself, according to its inclinations; and it hardens itself against the one or the other at its choice. You have rejected the one and kept the other—is your love a matter of reason? It is the heart, not the reason, which perceives God. This is faith—God perceived by the heart, not by reason.

III

There are two ways to urge the truths of our religion, one by the power of reason, the other by the authority of him who speaks. They make use of the former, not the latter. They do not say: You must believe this, because Scripture, which says it, is divine; but they say: You must believe it for such and such a reason,[1]—a feeble sort of argument, for reason is flexible by any and every thing.

have done the same against us. The miracles connected with Saint Ambrose and Saint Augustine were the defence of Ambrose against the Arian tribunal in A.D. 385, the miracle of the Holy Thorn is our defence against the Jesuits and others.

[1] A probable reference to Descartes and his school, who endeavoured to found belief in God and in the existence of the soul on reason.

IV

But even those who seem the most opposed to the glory of religion will not be useless to others. They shall be our first proof that there is something supernatural in it, for such blindness is not natural, and if their folly makes them so opposed to their own good, it will serve to insure the good of others, through their horror at an example so deplorable, and a folly so worthy of compassion.

V

The Church has always been assailed by two contrary errors, but never, perhaps, at the same time, as it is at present.[1] And if she is suffering more on this account, because of the multiplicity of errors, she gains this advantage from it, that they destroy one another. She complains of both, but much the most of the Calvinists, on the ground of the schism.

So then there are a great number of truths, both of faith and morals, which seem repugnant to one another, and which all exist in admirable order. The source of all the heresies is the exclusion of some of these truths; and the source of all the objections that the heretics bring against us is their ignorance of some of our truths.

Example.—In the matter of the Holy Sacrament: We believe that, the substance of the bread being changed, and consubstantial with the substance of the body of our Lord, Jesus Christ

[1] Jesuitism and Calvinism.

is really present in it. Here is one of the truths. Another is that this Sacrament is also a figure of that of the Cross and of Glory, and a commemoration of the two. This is the Catholic Faith, which comprises these two truths, which seem opposed.

The heresy of to-day, not conceiving that this sacrament can contain together both the presence of Jesus Christ and a figure of His presence, and that it can be both sacrifice and commemoration of sacrifice, believes that one of these truths cannot be admitted without the consequent exclusion of the other.

Therefore the shortest way to prevent heresies is to teach all truths, and the surest means to confute them is to declare all truths. For what will the heretics say?

All err the more dangerously that each follows a truth. Their fault is not that they follow what is false, but that they do not follow another truth.[1]

VI

If there was ever a time at which men ought to profess the two contraries[2] it is when they are reproached with omitting one. Then both Jesuits and Jansenists are wrong in hiding the two; but the Jansenists are the more wrong, for the Jesuits have the better professed the two.

[1] *Cf.* the fourth *Provinciale.*

[2] The doctrines of consubstantiation and of the type.

VII

How dreadful a thing it is to perceive all one has passing away!

VIII

Is it *probable* that *probability* will assure us? There is a difference between the sleep and the security of conscience. Nothing but the truth gives assurance. Nothing but the sincere search after truth gives rest.

IX

That which spoils our comparison of what happened formerly in the Church with what we see there now, is, that we usually regard Saint Athanasius, Saint Theresa, and the rest, as crowned with glory, and acting in regard to us like gods. Now that time has made things clear, so it appears; but at the time when men persecuted them, this great saint was a man named Athanasius, and Saint Theresa a woman. "Elias was a man like us, and subject to the same passions[1] as we are," says Saint James,[2] in order to disabuse the Christians of this false idea which makes us reject the example of the saints as disproportioned to our condition. They were saints, we say, not like us. Yet what happened at that time? Saint Athanasius was a man called Athanasius, accused of several crimes, condemned in such and such a Council for such and such a crime, all the Bishops assenting and the

[1] Greek πάθη—suffering.

[2] James v. 17. The context is worthy of note.

Pope too. What said they to those who resisted those decisions? That they were disturbers of the peace, schismatics, etc.[1]

Four sorts of persons—zeal without knowledge; knowledge without zeal; neither knowledge nor zeal; zeal and knowledge. The three first condemn him,[2] the (two) last absolve him, and are excommunicated by the Church, yet save the Church.[3]

X

ORDER

Men have a contempt for religion, a hatred of it, a fear that it should be true. To heal this, we must begin by showing that religion is not contrary to reason; next, that it is worthy of veneration, so that it may be respected; next, make it worthy of love, make good men hope it may be true; and then, show that it is true.

Worthy of veneration, because it has such a true knowledge of man; worthy of love, because it promises the true good.

XI

The best conditions of life, according to the

[1] Doubtless the reference is to the Jansenists, and especially to Arnauld. Arnauld was condemned, yet some Doctors maintained his cause; but Saint Athanasius, accused of murder, of sacrilege, of worse offences, was condemned by the Councils of Tyre in 335, of Arles in 353, of Milan in 355. The Pope, after long refusal, confirmed the condemnation. Now Athanasius is a saint—so may Arnauld be.

[2] Athanasius

[3] As we shall do.

world, are the hardest conditions according to God; and, on the contrary, nothing is so hard, according to the world, as the religious life; nothing is so easy as the religious life, according to God. According to the world nothing is better than to be in a great position with great wealth. According to God nothing is more difficult than to live in such a condition without taking part in it, without desire for it.[1]

XII

The Old Testament contained types of future joy, and the New contains the means of arriving at it. The types were—of joy; the means—penitence; aye, and for all that, the pascal lamb was eaten with bitter herbs, *cum amaritudinibus*.[2]

XIII

A person told me one day that he had great joy and confidence after confession; another told me that he continued in fear. Whereupon I thought that out of these two one good man might be made, and that each lacked in that he had not the other's feeling. This happens often in other things.

XIV

There is pleasure in being in a ship beaten by the storm when we are sure that it will not perish. The persecutions which trouble the Church are of this kind.

[1] Matt. x. 23.

[2] Exodus xii. 8. The Vulgate has *cum lactucis agrestibus*.

XV

Against those who, confident of God's mercy, remain indifferent, without doing good works.

As the two sources of our sins are pride and laziness, God has manifested two qualities in Himself to cure them: His mercy and His justice. The work of justice is to abase pride, however holy the works, *et non intres in judicium*, etc.,[1] and the work of mercy is to combat laziness by inviting to good works, in accordance with this passage: "The mercy of God invites to repentance";[2] and this saying of the men of Nineveh: "Let us be penitent to see if, peradventure, he will have pity on us."[3] And thus so far from mercy authorising relaxation, it is on the contrary precisely the quality which challenges it; so that, instead of saying: If there were no mercy in God, we should have to make all sorts of efforts after virtue, we ought to say: Because God is pitiful, we ought to make all sorts of efforts.

XVI (1)

All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, or the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life:[4] *libido sentiendi, libido sciendi, libido dominandi.* Unhappy is that accursed land which these three streams of fire inflame, rather than moisten. Happy are those who are on these streams, not plunged in them, not drawn into them, but immovable, firm and strong, upon

[1] Ps. cxliii. 2. [2] Rom. ii. 4. [3] Jonah iii. 9.
[4] John ii. 16.

these streams, not standing upright, but seated in a seat low and firmly established, whence they rise not before the dawn; but where, having rested in peace, they stretch forth the hand to Him Who can raise them, and cause them to stand upright and firm in the porches of the holy Jerusalem, where pride can no longer assail them and lay them low; and yet who weep, not because they see flow away all the perishable things which the torrents suck into them, but in remembrance of their dear fatherland, of the heavenly Jerusalem, the memory of which in their long exile is ever present with them.[1]

XVI (2)

The rivers of Babylon flow, and fall, and ingulf. O holy Sion, where all is firm and nothing falls!

We must be seated on the streams, not under them nor in them, but upon them, not upright, but seated; being seated, we are humble, and being above them we are safe. But in the gates of Jerusalem we shall stand upright.

Let us see if this our pleasure is established or fleeting; if it passes away, it is a river of Babylon.

XVII

Man is so made that, by dint of telling him

[1] The passage is founded on Saint Augustine's Commentary on Ps. cxxxvi. 1. Babylon is the world. The rivers of Babylon are the temptations of life.

he is a fool, he gets to believe it; and by dint of telling himself that it is so, he makes himself believe it. For man holds with himself an inward converse which it imports him to rule well: *corrumpunt mores bonos colloquia prava.*[1] We must keep silence as much as we can, and converse with ourselves only of God, whom we know to be the truth, and thus we persuade ourselves of truth.

XVIII (1)

Even had it power over all it wished, our will would never be satisfied; but it is satisfied from the moment at which it renounces this aim. Without this desire it cannot be discontented, with it the will cannot be contented.

XVIII (2)

The true and only virtue then is to hate self, for our lusts make self worthy of hatred, and to seek for a being truly lovable, that we may love him. But, since we cannot love what is outside us, we must love a being who is in us, yet who is not us, and this is true for every one in the world. There is but the Universal Being, who is such an one. The kingdom of God is within us;[2] the universal good is in us, is ourselves, and is not us.

XVIII (3)

It is not right that people should attach them-

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 33. The verse is a common proverbial saying, attributed to Menander.

[2] Luke xvii. 21.

selves to me, though they do it with pleasure and of their own accord. I should deceive those in whom I should raise this desire; for I am no man's aim and object, nor have I that with which to satisfy them. Am I not nigh death? So, then, the object of their attachment will die. How culpable I should be to induce belief in a falsehood; even though I should do so without effort, and they should believe it with pleasure, aye and give me pleasure by the belief, yet I am blameworthy if I make myself loved and attract people to attach themselves to me. I ought to warn those who would be ready to consent to the lie, that they should not believe it, whatever advantage might come to me from the belief; and so, too, that they ought not to attach themselves to me, for they must pass their lives and spend their pains on pleasing God, or seeking after Him.[1]

XIX

To put hope in forms is to be superstitious, but to be unwilling to submit to them is to be proud.

XX

There are three ways of getting belief—reason, custom, inspiration. The Christian religion, which alone has reason, does not admit as its real children any who believe without inspiration. It is not that she excludes reason and custom; on the contrary, we must have a mind open to proof, and conformed by custom,

[1] See *Life*, p. 37.

but humble ourselves beneath inspiration, for this alone can produce the true and salutary effect: *Ne evacuetur crux Christi.*[1]

XXI

Never do we evil so abundantly, with such gaiety, as when we do it conscientiously.

XXII

MISERY

Solomon and Job have known best and spoken best of the misery of man; the one the most fortunate, the other the most unfortunate; the one knowing by experience the vanity of pleasures, the other the reality of evils.

XXIII

There are but three kinds of people: those who find God and serve Him; those who are engaged in seeking Him, not having found Him; and those who, not having found Him, live without seeking Him. The first are reasonable and happy; the last are foolish and unhappy; those who pursue the middle course are unhappy and reasonable.

XXIV

People often take their imagination for their heart, and believe they are converted as soon as they think of being converted.

XXV

Reason acts slowly, and with so many points

[1] 1 Cor. i. 17.

of view, upon so many principles, which must be always present, that she is constantly drowsy and wandering, by lack of having all these principles present. Intuition does not act so; it acts in an instant, and is always ready to act. We must then put faith in intuition, otherwise faith will be always wandering.

XXVI

It is clear that man is made to think. Thought is his whole dignity and merit, and his whole duty is to think as he should, and his thought should begin with himself, his Maker and his end. About what then thinks the world? Never about this, but about dancing, playing on the lute, singing, verse-making, running at the ring, etc., fighting, getting made king, without thinking of what it is to be a king, and to be a man.

XXVII

Thought is man's whole dignity. But what is this thought? What rubbish it is!

XXVIII

If there is a God, we must love Him only, and not the creatures of a day. The reasoning of the unbeliever in Wisdom is founded only on the non-existence of God.[1] Granted this,

[1] *Wisdom*, ii. 1 to 9. "For the ungodly said, . . . Our life is short and tedious, and in the death of a man there is no remedy, . . . come on, therefore; let us enjoy the good things that are present: and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth."

says he, let us enjoy creatures. It is a *pis-aller*. But, if there were a God to love, he would not have concluded thus, but quite contrariwise. And this is the conclusion of the wise: there is a God, therefore let us not rejoice in creatures. Thus all which incites us to attach ourselves to creatures is evil, since this hinders us either from serving God, if we know Him, or from seeking Him, if we know Him not. Now we are full of lusts, therefore we are full of evil; therefore we ought to hate ourselves, and all which incites to any attachment but to God only.

XXIX

When we want to think of God, is there nothing which turns us aside and tempts us to think of other things? Any such thing is evil, and born with us.[1]

XXX

It is false that we are worthy that others should love us; it is unjust that we should wish it. If we were born reasonable, indifferent and acquainted with ourselves and others, we should not give this inclination to our will. However, we are born with it, so then we are born wrong, because all our inclination is to self. This is opposed to all idea of system. We ought to incline towards the general, and the inclination towards self is the beginning of all disorder in war, in policy, in economy, in the individual. So, then, the will is depraved.

[1] *i.e.* original sin.

If the members of natural and civil communities incline towards the good of the community, the communities themselves ought to incline towards another more general body of which they are members. We ought, therefore, to incline towards the general. So, then, we are born unjust and depraved.

XXXI

Intestine war in man between reason and passion. If we had only reason without passions. . . . If we had only the passions without reason. . . . But, having both, we cannot be without war, being unable to have peace with one without having war with the other. So man is always divided and opposed to himself.

XXXII

If life without search after what one is, is an unnatural blindness, so is it a frightful thing to believe in God, and live ill.

XXXIII

The last act is horrible, however fine all the rest of the comedy. They throw some earth on your head, and there you are for ever.

XXXIV

MEMBERS: COMMENCE WITH THEM

To regulate the love which we owe ourselves, we should conceive of a body full of thinking members, for we are members of the whole,

and consider how each member should love itself, etc.

If the feet and the hands had wills of their own they would never be duly regulated, except by submitting this private will to the head will, which governs the whole body. Outside this they are wrong and disorderly; but when they only wish for the good of the body, they are acting for their own good.

XXXV

UPON CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION WITHOUT SIGN OF REGRET

God looks only at the inside; the Church judges only by the outside.[1] God absolves as soon as He sees repentance in the heart, the Church when she sees it in action. God will make a Church pure within, which confounds by its inward, spiritual holiness the inward impiety of the Pharisees, of the wise and proud; and the Church will make an assembly of men whose outward habits are so pure, that they confound the habits of the heathen. If she has hypocrites in her midst, but so well disguised that she does not recognise their poison, the Church suffers them, for, though not accepted by God whom they cannot deceive, they are accepted by men, whom they deceive. And thus the Church is not dishonoured by their conduct, which seems holy. But you are willing that the Church should not judge, either of the heart, because that belongs to God, or of

[1] 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

the outward appearance, because God stops at the heart; and thus, taking from her all discretion, you retain in the Church the most abandoned, and those who so much dishonour her, that the synagogues of the Jews, and the sects of the philosophers, would have banished them as unworthy, and abhorred them as impious.[1]

XXXVI

The law has not destroyed nature, but has instructed her. Grace has not destroyed the law, but has energised it. The faith received in baptism is the source of all the life of Christians and converted people.

XXXVII

All great distractions are of danger to the Christian life; but, amongst all those which the world has invented, none gives so much cause for fear as play acting. A comedy is so natural and so delicate a representation of the passions, that it excites them and brings them to birth in our hearts, especially the passion of love, and most of all when it is represented as very chaste and honourable. For, the more innocent it seems to innocent people, the more ready are they to be touched by it. Its ardour pleases our self-love, which straightway forms a desire to bring about the same results that we have seen so well represented; and at the same time, we have a conscientious feeling founded

[1] *i.e.* the Jesuits. *Cf.* the second *Provinciale.*

on the honourable nature of the feelings that we see represented in the comedy, which remove fear from pure minds, which imagine that to love a love which seems to them so worthy is no injury to purity. Thus we quit the comedy with hearts so filled with all the beauties and all the gentle delights of love, and with heart and mind so persuaded of its innocence, that we are quite prepared to receive its first impressions, aye and to seek an occasion of arousing them in the heart of another, that he may receive the same pleasures (and may make), the same sacrifices that we have seen so well depicted in the comedy.

XXXVIII

There are many people who see the truth, and cannot attain unto it.

XXXIX (1)

Silence is the greatest persecution. The saints have never kept silence. It is true that you must be called, but you do not learn whether you are called from decrees of the Council, but from the necessity of speaking.[1] Now, after Rome has spoken, and men think that he[2] has condemned the truth,[3] and that they[4] have written it, and after that the books which have said the contrary have been censured, the more

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 16.
[2] The Pope.
[3] *i.e.* the truth, though the Pope and men think it not so.
[4] The Jesuits.

unjustly they have censured, and the more violently they desire to stifle speech, the louder you must cry, until there come a Pope who hears both sides, and who consults antiquity so as to do justice. So the good Popes will continue to find the Church in an uproar.

. . . The Inquisition and the Society,[1] the two scourges of the truth.

XXXIX (2)

If my letters are condemned at Rome, that which I condemn in them is condemned in Heaven: *Ad tuum, Domine Jesu, tribunal appello.*[2]

. . . You are yourself corruptible.[3] Seeing myself condemned, I feared that I might have written ill, but the example of so many pious writings makes me believe the contrary. It is no longer permitted to write well, so corrupt and ignorant is the Inquisition!

It is better to obey God than men.[4]

I fear nothing, I hope for nothing. The Bishops are not thus. Port Royal fears, and it is bad policy to separate them, for they will fear less, and make themselves feared more. I do not even fear such censures as these,[5] if they are not founded on those of tradition. Will you censure everything? What! even my deference! No! Tell me then what, or you will do nothing, if you do not point out the evil, and

[1] The usual abbreviation for the *Society of Jesus*.

The notes which follow are chiefly from M. Havet.

[2] The *Provinciales* were condemned at Rome, Sept. 6, 1657. [3] The Papacy. [4] Acts v. 29. [5] Doubtless an

why it is evil. And this is what they will have some trouble to do.[6]

XL

Men can't help being such fools, that not to be a fool would be but to be another sort of fool.

XLI

To make a saint of a man, needs must that there should be grace, and he who doubts this knows little of saints and men.

XLII

The Pope is first. What other is known by all? What other is recognised by all and has power to pervade the whole body, for he has the branch which rules, which insinuates itself into every part. How easy it would be for this to degenerate into tyranny! This is why Jesus Christ has imposed on them the command, *Vos autem non sic*.[1]

XLIII

In the ordinary conduct of His Church, God

allusion to some particular censure. [6] See the Sixteenth *Provinciale*: "I hope for nothing in the world. I fear nothing from it. I want nothing from it. By God's grace I have no need either of wealth, or of any man's influence. So then, my Father, I escape your hold at every point. You can't catch me from whatever side you make the attempt. True, indeed, you can touch Port-Royal, but you can't touch me." The extract, and part of the above sections, show us the other Pascal, the keen controversialist, almost the man of the world, by no means here the ideal humble Christian.

[1] Luke xxii. 26.

does not perform miracles. It would be a strange miracle if infallibility were found in an individual, but to be found in the whole multitude would be so natural that the action of God is hidden under nature, as in all His other works.[1]

XLIV

Eloquence is the art of saying things in such a way (1) that those to whom one talks listen to us without pain and with pleasure; (2) that they feel themselves interested, so that regard for self leads them of their own accord to reflect on what we say. So then it consists in a correspondence which we try to establish between the intelligence and the heart of those to whom we speak on the one hand, and on the other between the thoughts and modes of expression which we use; the presumption from all this is that we have studied well the heart of man, so as to find out all its springs, and to discover the just proportions of the discourse which we wish to suit to them. We must put ourselves in the position of our hearers, and make experiment on our own heart of the turn which we give to our discourse, to see whether the one is adapted to the other, and whether we can be sure that the auditor will be, so to say, forced to agree with us. We must confine ourselves, as far as possible, to what is natural; not make great what is little, nor little what is great. It is not enough that a

[1] *i.e.* the Pope is not infallible but the Church is infallible.

phrase should be a fine one[1]; it must be suited to the subject, without excess or defect.

XLV

Eloquence is the photograph of thought, and thus those who, having taken the photograph, add to it, make a picture, not a portrait.

XLVI

If we should never act except on a certainty, we should take no action in regard to religion, for religion is not certain. But how much action do we not take for uncertainties—sea voyages, battles!

XLVII (1)

We must speak like the world, but have a thought in the background, and judge all by it.

XLVII (2)

And I, too, will have my thoughts in the back of my head.

XLVIII

Force, not reason, rules the world, but reason uses force.

XLIX

Everything which is perfected by progress, perishes too by progress. Nothing which has

[1] Horace Ars Poetica 99 *et seq.*
Non satis est pulchra esse poemata; dulcia sunto,
Et, quocumque volent, animum auditoris agunto.
Ut ridentibus arrident, ita flentibus adsunt
Humani vultus.

been feeble can ever be absolutely strong. It is all very well to say, he has grown, he is changed: he is still the same.

L

Atheism, a sign of intelligence, but of a limited intelligence.

CHAPTER X

Thoughts on self. Man's desires, his faults, faith, knowledge, duty, etc. The power of the Cross.

I

WHEN our desires induce us to do anything, we forget our duty. We like to read a book, and read, when we ought to be doing something else. To remember this we should propose to ourselves something which we dislike, and when we excuse ourselves on the ground that we have something else to do, by this means we remember our duty.

II

We are creatures of movement; complete repose is death.

III

We have so slight a knowledge of ourselves that many think they are going to die when they are well, and many think they are well when they are about to die, not feeling the approaching fever, or the abscess ready to form.

IV

Memory is necessary for every operation of reason.

V

When I consider the short duration of my life lost in the eternity which precedes it and which follows it, the little space which I fill swallowed up in the infinite immensity of spaces of which I know nothing, and which know nothing of me, I am frightened and astonished to see myself here rather than there; for there is no reason why here rather than there, why present rather than past. Who put me there? By whose order and whose conduct have this place and time been destined for me? *Memoria hospitis unius diei prætereuntis.*[1]

VI

Why is my knowledge limited? Why is my stature limited? The duration of my life to a hundred years rather than a thousand? What reason has nature had for giving me such a life, for choosing this number rather than another in that infinite number from which there is no reason for choosing one rather than another, there being no inducement to one course rather than to another?

VII

The eternal silence of this infinite space affrights me.

[1] *Wisdom*, v. 14: The remembrance of a guest of a single passing day.

VIII

Each individual is a whole to himself, for, he being dead, all is dead for him. Whence it springs that each believes he is all to all. We must not judge of nature by ourselves, but by her.

IX

The average man has the power of not thinking about what he does not wish to think about. . . . But there are those who have not this power of preventing themselves from thinking, and who think the more, the more they are forbidden to think. These latter undo false religions, aye, and the true religion, if they do not light on solid arguments.

X

How far is the knowledge of God from the love of God!

XI (1)

Nothing is so intolerable to man as to be in complete repose, without passions, without business, without diversion, without exercise. Then he feels his nothingness, his abandonment, his insufficiency, his dependence, his powerlessness, his emptiness. From the bottom of his heart come forth incontinent—weariness, melancholy, sadness, sorrow, vexation, despair.

XI (2)

When a soldier or a labourer, etc., complains of his labour, give him nothing to do.

XII

Man does not act by reason, though it is the essence of his existence.

XIII

All their principles are true—sceptics, stoics, atheists, etc. But their conclusions are false, because the opposite principles are true too.

XIV

We owe many thanks to those who tell us of our faults, for they humble us. They teach us that we have been scorned, and do not prevent our being scorned in the future, for we have many other faults to bring this about. Such persons prepare the way for the discipline of correction and removal of a fault.

XV

Faith is the gift of God; never believe that we call it a gift of reason. The other religions do not assert this of their faiths. They propose reason only as the path by which to arrive at them, yet reason does not lead to them.

XVI

Such figures of the redemption of all, as that the sun shines on all,[1] point only to totality; but the figures of exclusions, as of the Jews elected to the exclusion of the Gentiles, point to exclusion.

[1] Ecclesiasticus xlii. 16; Matt. v. 45; John i. 9.

"Jesus Christ the Redeemer of all." [1] Yes, for He has offered redemption, as a man who has redeemed all those who shall wish to come to him. As for those who shall die on the way, that is their misfortune, but as for Him, He has offered them redemption. This is a fair argument in the case in which he who redeems and he who preserves from death are two, but not in the case of Jesus Christ, Who is both one and the other. No, for Jesus Christ, in His capacity of Redeemer, is not perhaps master of all; and thus, so far as His capacity extends, He is Redeemer of all.

XVII

It is no rare thing to have to blame people for too much docility. It is a vice as natural as incredulity. Superstition.

XVIII

Our religion is both wise and foolish. Wise,

[1] *Jesu redemptor omnium*—the first line of the hymn for Vespers on Christmas Day.

The *pensée* is a hard one. Pascal believes that election is taught by Scripture and the Church, but his logical mind is confronted by opposing doctrine. "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Yes, Christ offers the light to all; but some are excluded from the chance of being able to accept it. The doctrine of election and reprobation was accepted by the Assembly of English and Scotch Divines, and by the Reformed Churches in France and in the Low Countries. The latter-day Christian usually resents it, holding with the Rev. John Wesley (*Predestination calmly considered*) that other explanations are more reasonable and less frightful.

because it is the most learned, and the most founded on miracles, prophecies, etc. Foolish, because it is not all this which is its essence. Its wisdom may well condemn those who are not of it, but is not the ground of belief to those who are of it. What makes them believe is the Cross, *ne evacuata sit crux*.[1] And thus St Paul, who came with wisdom and signs, says that he has not come with wisdom or signs; for he came to convert. But those who only come to convince may say that they come with wisdom and signs.[2]

XIX

REPUTATION

From our infancy admiration spoils everything. What a clever remark! How well he's done it! Isn't it a clever child? etc. The children of Port Royal, to whom they do not give this incentive to emulation and reputation, fall into listlessness.

XX

We do not get tired of eating and sleeping every day, for hunger and sleep are born again and again; if this were not so, we should get tired of them. Thus without hunger after spiritual things, we should get tired of them. Hunger after righteousness, the eighth beatitude.[3]

[1] *Cf.* Part II. chapter ix. section xx.
[2] 1 Cor. i. 22. [3] Matt. v. 6.

XXI

It is nowise possible that God should be the end if He is not the beginning. We look upwards, but our foundation is sand;[1] and the earth gives way, and we fall whilst gazing on heaven.

XXII

Description of man—dependence, desire for independence, wants.

XXIII

Without thought there is no misery. A house in ruins is not miserable. Only man is miserable. *Ego vir videns.*[2]

XXIV (1)

Wisdom sends us to childhood: *nisi efficiamini sicut parvuli.*[3]

XXIV (2)

True religion teaches our duties, our weaknesses (pride and lusts), and the remedies, humility, mortification.

XXV (1)

I should not be a Christian apart from miracles, said Saint Augustine.

[1] Unless we have God to rest on—God the beginning, foundation.

[2] Lam. i. 3. [3] Matt. xviii. 3.

XXV (2)

Apart from miracles there would have been no sin in not believing Jesus Christ: *See whether I lie.*[1]

XXVI

Where is thy God?[2] The miracles show Him like a flash of lightning.

XXVII

One must be sincere in religion—true Pagans, true Jews, true Christians.

XXVIII

When God takes anything from us, and by the event, which is a manifestation of the will of God, it appears that God is not willing that we should have a thing, that is then forbidden as though it were a sin, since the will of God is that we should have neither one nor the other.

XXIX

The arrangement by means of dialogues. What ought I to do? Everywhere I see nothing but darkness. Shall I believe that I am nothing? Shall I believe that I am God? All things change and succeed one another. You are wrong, there is . . .

XXX

In the Letter on Injustice might come the absurdity of eldest sons having everything. My

[1] Job vi. 28. [2] Psalm xlii. 3.

friend, you were born on this side of the mountain, so then it is just that your eldest son should have all. Why do you kill me?[1]

XXXI

If God were to give us masters under His own hand, O with what good will ought we to obey them! Necessity and events are such masters.

XXXII

These people lack heart,[2] don't make friends of them.

XXXIII

VARIABLENESS

We think we play a common organ when we touch man. Men, in truth, are organs, but odd ones, changeable, variable. Those who only know how to play the common organs will get no harmony out of these. You must know where the pipes are.

XXXIV

The faith received in baptism is the source of the whole life of Christians and converts.

XXXV

The greatness of Saint Theresa. What pleases God is her deep humility in her revelations. What pleases man is her illumination.

[1] *Cf.* chap. vii., No. II.

[2] *i.e.* the Jesuits,—the reference is to their replies to the *Provinciales*.

XXXVI

Types. The prophets prophesied by types—a girdle, a beard, burnt hair, etc. The Old Testament is a sum total. Two errors—1. To take all literally. 2. To take all spiritually.

XXXVII

True Christianity consists in the submission of reason, and its use.

XXXVIII.

The Church is in a good state when it has no other support than God.

XXXIX

This religion, so great in miracles (unexceptionable holy fathers, scientific men, great men, witnesses, martyrs, permanently established thrones [David], Isaiah, prince of the blood), so great in knowledge, after having set forth all its miracles, all its wisdom, rejects all that and says that it has neither wisdom nor signs, but the cross and folly. For those who by these signs and this wisdom have merited your belief, and have proved to you their character, declare to you that nothing of all this, but the virtue of the foolishness of the cross, without wisdom or signs, can change you, and make us capable of knowing and loving God, not the signs without this virtue. Thus our religion is foolish as regards the efficient cause, and wise as regards the wisdom which prepares the way for this efficient cause.

XL

Augustine, *de Civ.* v. 10. This rule is universal. God can do all, except the things which, if He did them, He would not be all-powerful—such as die, be deceived, lie, etc.

XLI

UPON THE MIRACLE[1]

As God has made no family more happy, may He bring it to pass that no family may be more grateful.

Chapter XI

The Mystery of Jesus.[2]

JESUS suffers in His passion[3] the torments which men make for Him; but in His agony He suffers the torments which He gives Himself—*turbavit semetipsum.*[4] It is a torment from a hand not human, but all-powerful, for it needs all power to endure it.

[1] Of the holy thorn.

[2] This "precious fragment" was first published by M. Faugère. He found it at p. 87 of the autograph.

[3] The passion on the Cross.

[4] John xi. 33. The actual words in the Vulgate are—*turbavit seipsum.* It is worth noticing that no such words occur in the account of the agony in the garden, to which Pascal here refers. The idea seems to be—as at the graveside of Lazarus, so in the Garden of Gethsemane—*turbavit seipsum.*

Jesus seeks some consolation, if no more, from His three dearest friends, and they sleep. He prays them to endure with Him a while, and they utterly neglect Him, having so little compassion that it could not hinder them sleeping even for a moment. And thus Jesus was left alone to the wrath of God.

Jesus is without one on earth, not only to feel with and partake of His suffering, but even to know it; heaven and He are alone in this knowledge.

Jesus is in a garden, not of delights, like the first Adam, who ruined himself and all the human race there, but of pains, and He saved Himself and all the human race in it.

He suffers this pain and this abandonment amid the horror of night.

I think Jesus never complained but this once only; but then He complains as if He could no longer contain His excessive grief: My soul is sorrowful even to death.[1]

Jesus seeks the company and solace of men. It seems to me that this is the single instance in all His life. But He does not receive it, for His disciples are asleep.

Jesus will be in agony [2] until the end of the world. For all this time we must not sleep.

Jesus, amid this universal desertion, even of His friends chosen to watch with Him, finding

[1] May we add that other cry most full of pathos, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?

[2] He felt and feels each sin that is committed. We must not sleep while He is suffering.

them asleep, is grieved at it because of the danger to which they expose not Him, but themselves, and during their ingratitude He admonishes them of their own safety and welfare,[1] with a heartfelt tenderness for them, and He warns them that the spirit is willing and the flesh weak.

Jesus, finding them still sleeping, without being kept from sleep either by consideration for Him or for themselves, has the kindness not to wake them up, but to leave them to their repose.

Uncertain of the Father's will, Jesus prays, in fear of death; but having found that will, He meets it and offers Himself to it. *Eamus. Processit.* (*Joannes*).[2]

Jesus begged of men, and His prayer was not granted.

Jesus, whilst His disciples slept, wrought their safety. He has done the same for each of the justified whilst they were asleep, both in their nothingness before they were born, and in their sins since their birth.

He prays but once that the cup may pass, and that one time with submission; and twice that it may come, if needs must.

Jesus in His weariness. Jesus, seeing all His friends asleep and all His enemies awake, gives Himself over entirely to His Father.[3]

In Judas Jesus does not consider his enmity, but the bidding of God which He loves, and admits, since He calls him friend.[4]

[1] Luke xxii. 46.
[2] John xviii. 4.
[3] Matt. xxvi. 42, 44.
[4] Matt. xxvi. 50.

Jesus tears Himself from His disciples to enter into agony. We must tear ourselves from our nearest and dearest to follow His example.[1]

Jesus being in agony, and in the greatest sorrow, let us pray long.[2]

II

Console thyself; thou wouldst not seek Me, hadst thou not found Me.

I thought of thee in My agony. I dropped some drops of blood for thee.

It is tempting Me rather than proving thyself, to think whether thou wouldst act well in such and such a case, which has not happened.

Let My rules guide thee. See how I have guided the Virgin and the Saints, who have let Me act in them.

The Father loves all that I[3] do.

Shall I for ever shed My human blood, and thou shed no tears?

Thy conversion is my business; fear not, and pray with confidence, as though you prayed for Me.

I am present by My word in Scripture; by My spirit and inspirations in the Church; by

[1] See Pascal's *Life* by his sister, p. 36 of this selection.

[2] Luke xxii. 44—the Vulgate has *prolixius orabat.*

[3] M. Havet writes the *Je* in capitals, and adds: "This JE contains a whole mystery—that the Father and the Son are one." I have not had an opportunity of seeing the manuscript; but, if the *Je* is written in capital letters there, he is probably right.

My power in the priests; by My prayer in the faithful. Doctors will not heal you, for you will die at last. But I am He Who heals, and makes the body deathless.

Endure chains and bodily servitude; for the present I do not deliver but from spiritual slavery.

I am more thy friend than such an one; for I have done more for thee than they, and they would not suffer what I have suffered for thee, and they did not die for thee in the time of thy infidelities and cruelties, as I did, and as I am ready to do, and do in My elect, and at the Holy Sacrament.

If thou knewest thy sins, thou wouldest lose heart. I will lose it then, O Lord, for on Thy assurance I believe their malice. No, for I, by whom thou learnest it, can heal thee of them, and the fact that I tell thee so, is a sign that I mean to heal thee. In proportion as thou shalt expiate them, thou wilt know them, and it will be said to thee. "See the sins which are forgiven thee." Repent then for thy secret sins, and for the hidden wickedness of those which thou knowest.

Lord, I give Thee all.

I love thee more ardently than thou hast loved thy impurities. *Ut immundus pro luto.*[1]

To Me be the glory, and not to thee, worm and dust.

Interrogate thy director when My words are to thee occasion of evil, of vanity or curiosity.

[1] The words are not in the Bible; but there may be a reminiscence of 2 Pet. ii. 22.

III

I see my abyss of pride, of curiosity, of lust. There is no relation between me and God, nor Jesus Christ the righteous. But He has been made sin by me;[1] all Thy plagues have fallen on Him. He is more abominable than I, and far from abhorring me, He holds Himself honoured that I should go to Him and succour Him.

But He has healed Himself, and with greater reason will heal me.

I must add my wounds to His, and join myself to Him, and He will save me in saving Himself.

But I must not add to them in the future.

IV

Console thyself: it is not from thee that thou oughtest to expect anything; but, on the contrary, in expecting nothing from thyself, thou oughtest to expect.

V

Jesus Christ was dead, but visible, on the Cross. He is dead and hidden in the sepulchre.

Jesus Christ was buried by saints only.

Jesus Christ did no miracles in the sepulchre.

None but the saints entered there.

There Jesus Christ takes a new life, not upon the Cross.

It is the last mystery of the passion and of the redemption.

[1] 2 Cor. v. 21.

SEPULCHRE OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ has no place on earth where to rest but in the tomb.

His enemies only ceased to trouble Him in the tomb.

VI

Often I speak to thee and counsel thee, because thy Director cannot speak to thee, for I would not have thee lack a Director. And perhaps I grant it to His prayers, and thus He guides thee without thou seeing Him. Thou wouldst not seek Me if thou didst not possess Me; be not anxious then.

VII

Do not compare thyself with others, but with Me. If thou dost not find Me in those to whom thou comparest thyself, the comparison is with him who is abominable. If thou findest Me there, compare thyself with Me. But whom dost thou compare with Me? Shall it be thyself, or Me in thee? If it is thyself, it is one who is abominable. If it is I, thou comparest Me to Me. Now, I am God in all.

VIII

It seems to me that Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, suffered His wounds only to be touched.[1] *Noli me tangere.*[2] We must unite ourselves with His sufferings only.

[1] John xx. 27. [2] John xx. 17.

IX

At the Last Supper He gave Himself in communion as mortal, to the disciples of Emmaus as risen from the dead, to the whole Church as ascended into heaven.

X

"Pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Luke xxii. 46. It is dangerous to be tempted; and those who are tempted are tempted because they do not pray.

Et tu conversus confirma tuos.[1] But before,[2] *conversus Jesus respexit Petrum.*[3]

St Peter asks leave to strike Malchus,[4] and strikes before hearing the reply,[5] and Jesus Christ replies afterwards.[6]

XI

Jesus Christ would not be killed without the forms of justice; for it is much more ignominious to die by justice than by an unjust sedition.

XII

The false justice of Pilate did but make Jesus Christ suffer; for by his false justice he causes

[1] Luke xxii. 32.

[2] There is a verbal difficulty in the words "But before," and some commentators suggest "after"; but doubtless the passage has reference to preventing grace. Before Peter—turned from evil—can strengthen his brethren, Jesus must turn to him.

[3] Luke xxii. 61.

[4] Luke xxii. 49.

[5] John xviii. 10.

[6] John xviii. 11.

Him to be scourged, and then he kills Him. It would have been better to have killed Him first. Thus it is with the falsely just. They do good works and evil to please the world, and to show that they are not altogether on the side of Jesus Christ; for they are ashamed of Him. And at last, in great temptations, and on great occasions, they kill Him.

APPENDIX

Comparison of the early Christians with those of to-day.[1]

IN the early times Christians were perfectly instructed in all points necessary to salvation; but to-day we see an ignorance so gross that it makes all those who feel tenderly towards the Church lament.

In those days men entered the Church only after great labours and long desire. Now we find ourselves in it without any trouble, without care and without labour.

Then they were not admitted until after a very exacting examination. Now we are admitted before we are in a condition to be examined.

In those days a man was not received until after he had abjured his past life, and renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil. Now we enter the Church before we are in a condition to do any of these things.

In fine, in the days of old a man must leave the world to be received into the Church, whilst to-day we enter the Church at the same time

[1] This fragment, published by Bossut, bears no date. It is accepted by the modern Editors as the work of Pascal.

that we enter the world. By this method of proceeding an essential distinction was recognised between the world and the Church. They were considered as two opposites, as two irreconcilable enemies, one of whom is engaged in ceaselessly persecuting the other, and the weaker-looking of whom must one day triumph over the stronger, so that you quitted one of these two opposite sides to embrace the other, you abandoned the maxims of the one to lay hold on the maxims of the other, you divested yourself of the sentiments of the one to reclothe yourself in the sentiments of the other; finally men quitted, renounced, abjured the world, the place of their first birth, to devote themselves wholly to the Church, where they were born again, and thus an enormous difference was recognised between the one and the other,—whilst to-day we find ourselves almost at the same moment in one and in the other, and the moment at which we are born into the world and reborn into the Church is the same, in such a way that when reason comes she makes no distinction between these two so contrary worlds. She is brought up in the one and the other both together. We attend the Sacrament, and we enjoy the pleasures of the world. And thus whilst formerly an essential distinction was observed between the one and the other, now we see them confused and mingled, so that we no longer distinguish between them.

From this it results that of old one found only well-instructed persons among Christians,

instead of being in the dreadful ignorance of to-day. From this it results that of old those who had been regenerated by baptism, and who had left the vices of the world to enter into the piety of the Church, so rarely fell back from the Church into the world,—whilst now nothing is more ordinary than to see the vices of the world in the hearts of Christians. The Church of the saints finds itself soiled by the admixture of the wicked; and her children, whom she has conceived and nourished in her bosom from infancy, are those who bring into her heart, aye, even into participation in her most holy and awful mysteries, the most cruel of her enemies, a worldly spirit, a spirit of ambition, of revenge, of impurity, of lust; and the love which she has for her children compels her to admit into her bowels the most cruel of her persecutors.

But the misfortunes which have followed a change of discipline so salutary ought not to be imputed to the Church, for her spirit has not changed, though her conduct has changed. For having recognised that the putting off of baptism left a great number of children in the curse of Adam, her desire was to deliver them from this mass of perdition[1] by at once bestowing the help which she gives them; and this good mother sees with the greatest sorrow that what she has provided for the safety of her children has become the occasion of the loss of her adults. The true spirit of the Church is this, that those whom she withdraws at so tender an

[1] 1 Cor. v. 6. (*Massa* in the Vulgate.)

age from the contagion of the world should get to feel in a way quite contrary to that of the world. She anticipates reason in order to anticipate the vices into which a corrupt reason would draw them; and before their intelligence can act, she fills them with her spirit, so that they may live in ignorance of the world and in a state so far removed from vice that they shall never have known it. This is seen in the ceremonies of baptism; for she does not grant baptism to children until they have declared by the mouth of their godparents that they desire it, that they believe, that they renounce the world and the devil. And, as she would have them preserve this disposition throughout all the remainder of their life, she expressly orders them to keep it inviolable, and ordains by a command which cannot be dispensed with, that the godparents shall instruct the children in all these matters; for she does not desire that those whom she has nourished in her breast should be to-day less instructed and less zealous than the adults whom formerly she admitted into her fold; she wishes for no less perfection in those whom she brings up than in those whom she receives. However men use baptism in a way so contrary to the intention of the Church, that we cannot think of the matter without horror. We make, so to say, no further reflection on so great a benefit, because it has never been wished for, because we have never asked for it, because we do not even remember having received it. . . .

But, as it is clear that the Church does not

demand less zeal in those who have been brought up in the household of faith [1] than in those who aspire to be so brought up, we must put before our eyes the example of the catechumens, consider their ardour, their devotion, their abhorrence of the world, their generous renunciation of the world; and, if they were not thought worthy to receive baptism without these dispositions which are not found in the others. . . .

They must then submit to receive the instruction which they would have had at the commencement of their entry into the communion of the Church; they must, besides, submit to constant penitence, and must have less dislike to the severity of their mortifications than the charm which they find in the poisoned pleasures of sin. . . .

To dispose them to instruction, we must make them understand the difference between the customs practised in the Church at various times. . . .

That in the infant Church they taught the catechumens, that is to say, those who were candidates for baptism, before baptising them; and that they were not admitted to it until after full instruction in the mysteries of religion, until after repentance from their past life; after wide knowledge of the greatness and excellence of the profession of faith, and of the Christian maxims into which they desired to enter for ever; until after conspicuous signs of a true conversion of heart, and, after an ardent desire for baptism.

[1] Gal. vi. 10.

That when these things were known by all the Church, they conferred on them the sacrament of incorporation, by which they became members of the Church; whilst in these days, baptism being for very important reasons granted to children before they have made practice of reason, it results that the negligence of parents allows Christians to grow up without any knowledge of the greatness of our religion.

When instruction preceded baptism, all were taught, but now that baptism precedes instruction, the teaching, which was a necessary condition, has become voluntary, and next neglected and almost abolished. The true reason for this conduct is that we are persuaded of the necessity of baptism, and we are not persuaded of the need for instruction. Thus when instruction preceded baptism, the necessity of the one involved the necessity of the other; but now that baptism precedes instruction, since we have been made Christian without having been instructed, we think we can remain Christian without having ourselves instructed. . . . And whilst the early Christians showed so much gratitude towards the Church for a grace which was granted to them only after long entreaty, to-day they show so much ingratitude for this same grace which she grants them before they are even in a condition to ask for it. And if she so strongly abominated the fall of early Christians, although so rare, how ought she to abominate the continual fall and falling again of the latter-day Christian, though they are much more beholden

to her, since she drew them much sooner and much more freely from damnation in which they were involved by their first birth! She cannot see without groaning the abuse of the greatest of her graces, and that what she has done to assure their safety should become the almost certain occasion of their loss, for she has not [1] . . .

[1] "In regard to the conditions exacted, in the fourth century, from those who asked leave to be received into the Church, consult especially, in Augustine, chapter vi. of the book *De Fide et Operibus*, and the whole book *De Catechizandis Rudibus*. Upon the ceremonies of baptism, such as the renunciation of the World and of the Devil, see the first chapters of the book of Ambrose *De Mysteriis*. We find reflexions like those of Pascal, although less bitter, at the end of Fénelon's *Dialogues* on eloquence, and in the *Discours* of Fleury."—HAVET.

INDEX

(The references are to pages.)

ADVANTAGES of birth, 99.
Arnauld, xxi, xxii, 181.
Atheism, 198.
Atheists, 53.
Attachment to individuals, 185.
Augustine, St, 204, 208.
Automatous, 128.

BELIEF, 141.
Babylon, 184.

CHRISTIANS, early, 217.
Christian religion, 160.
Cipher, 150.
Circle, metaphor of, 65.
Cleopatra's Nose, 107.
Conditions of reception into the early Church, 223.
Confession, 81, 182, 191.
Conversation, 109.
Cromwell, 87.
Custom, 101.

DEATH is solitary, 143.
Death the last act of the comedy, 190.
Descartes, xxxiv.
Deus absc
166.
Discipline, 201.
Diversion, 95, 97.
Doubt, 143.
Dreams, 90.

ELOQUENCE, 196.
Epictetus, xxxv.
Errors, 111.

FAITH, 129.
Force the best argument, 98, 197.

GOD, 119, 147.
God's duty, 172.
Good stories, 103.
Grace, xix.
Greatness, 154.

HABIT, 89.
Happiness, 79, 116.
Heresies, two, 178.
Honest man, 102, 104.

IMAGINATION, 187.
Infallibility, 196
Inspiration 24, 186.

JANSENISTS, xxii.
Jansenius, xxii.
Jesus Christ, 127, 157.
Jewish religion, 145, 160.
Justice, 101, 205.

version, 96.
of their para-

Life, 19.
Love, 107, 177, 200.

MAHOMEDAN religion.
Man, 66, 75.
—— a thinking reed, 76.
—— an organ, 206.

Memory, 199.
Miracle, definition of, 176.
—— of the Holy Thorn, xxix, 175, 208.
Miracles, 20, 140, 170.
Misery, 204.
Montaigne, xxxv, 84, 86, 91.
Mystery of Jesus, 208.

NOTES of religion, 130.
Nuns of Port Royal, 174.

OMNIBUSES, Pascal's scheme, 31.
Originality, 99, 109.
Original sin, 136.

PASCAL'S aim, 149.
—— books, xxxiv.
—— conversions, xvi.
—— friends, xxxii.
—— mathematical discoveries, 5.
—— scientific discoveries, 10.
—— method with Atheists, 23.
—— politics, 38.
—— profession of faith, 51.
—— religion, xiv.
Pascal Jacqueline, xxix, xxxiv, 15.
[illegible]sées xiii.
[illegible] 19.
Perier, Mme., [illegible]
—— Margaret, xxix, 19.
Pope, the, 195.
Port Royal, xxiv, xxvii.
Poverty, love of, 29, 40.
Proofs of Christianity, 133.
Property, 108.
Prophecy, 158.
Provinciales, xii, 194.

RACINE, xxvii.
Real presence, the, xxi.
Reason, 85, 139, 140, 187.
Repose, 198, 200.
Reprobation, 161, 165, 201, 202.
Reputation, 203.
Rules of life, 27.

SAINTE-BEUVE, xxxvi.
Scepticism, xvii, 113.
Style, 112.
Submission, 139.

TAUTOLOGY, 111.
Thought, 188.
Types, 145, 150, 151.
Truth, religious truth a science of the heart, 117.

VACUUM, 9.
Virtue, 104.

WAGER, the, 121.
Weather, effect of the, 107.
Wisdom, 91.

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